
March 7, 2024

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis Maryland 21401

RE: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 1082 – Solar Energy and Energy Storage - Development and State Procurement

Dear Chair Feldman and Committee members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) offers the following information on Senate Bill 1082 for the Committee's consideration.

As drafted, Senate Bill 1082 creates the Utility-Scale Solar Design and Siting Advisory Commission in the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Power Plant Research Program. The Commission must advise the Governor and General Assembly on numerous items including setback ranges, screening requirements, and balancing competing goals related to solar energy, as well as establish a model policy for the development of solar energy generating stations in each county, methods for local prioritization of solar, and decommissioning standards for solar generating stations. Senate Bill 1082 also establishes requirements for planting and maintaining cover crops for soil generation on the land where the solar station resides. Finally, the bill mandates requirements for the state to procure a certain amount of solar energy each year, establishes a process for selling energy or renewable energy credits, and requires MEA to analyze state land and develop a database to recommend state lands for solar energy development.

MDOT is actively investigating how it may leverage appropriate existing MDOT property to generate solar energy. It should be noted that some MDOT property, such as State Highway Administration right of way, has encumbrances that would prevent it from being utilized as space for solar projects. In some cases, property was purchased with federal funds, which places certain restrictions on how the property may be used and how it may be disposed of. Given the complex nature of the property that MDOT owns and projects that MDOT does, we would request that the sponsor include the Department on the Utility-Scale Solar Design and Siting Advisory Commission.

The Maryland Department of Transportation looks forward to further collaboration with the sponsor and respectfully requests the Committee consider this information during its deliberations of Senate Bill 1082.

Respectfully submitted,

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