

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment
Testimony on: SB1054 –Local Government – Buildings Permits for Residential Solar Energy and Residential Energy Storage Systems – Required Platform and Inspections
Submitting: Deborah A. Cohn
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: March 7, 2024

Dear Chair Feldman and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing my testimony today in support of SB1054.

Problem: The Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) calls for 14.5% of Maryland’s clean electricity to be contributed by solar energy by 2030, but the State has repeatedly fallen significantly short of the interim targets. The [Maryland Task Force to Study Solar Incentives](#) (Task Force) recommended that all jurisdictional permitting authorities utilize a standard online standardized permitting process, such as Solar App+ to streamline and accelerate solar permitting to install residential solar energy generating and storage systems and any necessary related electrical upgrades.

Solution: SB1054 codifies this recommendation.

The bill requires all counties and municipalities to adopt Solar App+, an automated permitting software developed by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), a branch of the US Department of Energy (DOE), by August 1, 2025. The app is free for jurisdictions and is already widely used. SB1054 also requires virtual inspections to further streamline the permitting process.

Federal funds are available to assist jurisdictions in adopting Solar App+. The Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) has received \$3.8 million from DOE to provide financial or technical support to jurisdictions for this purpose. The bill delays the August 1, 2025 deadline, however, should federal and state funds be insufficient.

Because the bill is carefully designed to implement the Task Force’s recommendation, I urge a **FAVORABLE** report for SB1054 by this committee.

Thank you.

Deborah A. Cohn