

# **Testimony SB1054 Solar App+.pdf**

Uploaded by: Debbie Cohn

Position: FAV

**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

# **Factsheet for SolarAPP+.pdf**

Uploaded by: Emily Scarr

Position: FAV

# Streamlining Rooftop Solar

## Unleashing Maryland's Potential with SolarAPP+

Anatolly Gleb Shutterstock.com

This bill will help Maryland meet its climate goals and transition to 100% clean energy by reducing permitting delays and expenses.

### Why rooftop solar and battery storage:

- Reduces dependence on fossil fuels.
- Alleviates strain on the electrical grid.
- Enhances resilience against extreme weather and increased demand.
- Economical with no additional land-use footprint.
- Reduces homeowners' energy bills.

### The challenge:

- Only 5.3% of Maryland homes have rooftop solar, a figure that needs to grow rapidly for the state to meet its clean energy goals.
- Obtaining a permit from the local building department for rooftop solar and battery storage can take days, weeks, or months.
- The permit process can be cumbersome, and costly.

### A solution for efficient permitting: SolarAPP+

- Developed by the the Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL).
- Free tool that cuts permit processing time, ensuring a faster, more cost-effective process.
- Solar projects submitted through SolarAPP+ are installed and inspected, on average, 12 business days faster.
- 235 communities across the country have signed up, including: Montgomery County, MD; Phoenix and Tucson, AZ; San Francisco, CA; Denver, CO; Oklahoma City, OK; and, Houston, TX.

## Sen. Kramer and Del. Fraser-Hidalgo: SB1054/HB1265

This bill requires cities and counties to adopt SolarAPP+. Widespread adoption will help unlock the full potential of rooftop solar, making the transition to renewable energy faster, more affordable, and accessible for all.

### Contact:

Emily@marylandpirg.org  
advocacy@solarunitedneighbors.org



**SB 1054\_FAV\_MarylandPIRG\_EnvMD\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Emily Scarr

Position: FAV

**SB1054: Local Government – Building Permits for Residential Solar Energy and Residential Energy Storage Systems – Required Platform and Inspection**  
**Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**  
**March 7th, 2024**  
**FAVORABLE**

*Maryland PIRG is a state based, small donor funded public interest advocacy organization with grassroots members across the state. We work to find common ground around common sense solutions that will help ensure a healthier, safer, more secure future*

*Environment Maryland is a citizen-based statewide environmental advocacy organization. We work to protect clean air, clean water, and open space.*

Our groups urge support for SB1054 to codify a recommendation of the [Maryland Task Force to Study Solar Incentives](#) to streamline and speed up solar permitting in Maryland to help us deploy more rooftop solar faster through the adoption of Solar APP+.

As this committee is well aware, only 5.3% of Maryland homes have rooftop solar, a figure that needs to grow rapidly for the state to meet its clean energy goals. Installing a rooftop solar system should be as fast and easy as possible, without compromising health and safety. Unfortunately, obtaining a permit from the local building department for rooftop solar and battery storage can take days, weeks, or months. The permit process can be complex, cumbersome, and costly. Maryland can't afford that kind of inefficiency for something as common-sense as rooftop solar.

## **What is Solar App+ ?**

**The Department of Energy created SolarAPP+, a free tool for localities that can cut permit processing time to less than one hour, slashing wait times, and lowering costs.**

- The Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) has received \$4.48 million from DOE to support adoption of SolarAPP+ by Maryland jurisdictions.
- Solar projects submitted through SolarAPP+ are installed and inspected on average 12 business days faster than projects using the conventional process. These time savings, coupled with a uniform interface across jurisdictions promises to make it easier and faster to install more rooftop solar more affordably.
- SolarAPP+ also accommodates permitting for other clean energy technologies, such as in-home battery storage, making a comprehensive shift to being able to power our lives with renewable energy easier.
- Montgomery County has piloted SolarAPP+, and 240 communities across the country have signed up, including: Phoenix and Tucson, AZ; San Francisco, CA; Denver, CO; Oklahoma City, OK; and, Houston, TX.

Last year California became the first state to mandate that cities and counties adopt SolarAPP+ to make residential solar and energy storage installations fast, streamlined and hassle-free. It's time for Maryland to do the same.

### **Potential Amendments**

We have been working with stakeholders from local and county governments on several amendments. The primary amendment would ensure the law is technology neutral and not mandating the use of a single software so as not to set a precedent and to enable counties and municipalities to develop their own or contract with a private company to provide automated permitting. We are comfortable with this amendment as long as it does not open the door for software that doesn't have the same functionality as Solar APP+. Requiring online permitting is not good enough. And to be clear, we do think Solar APP+ is and will remain the best option for local permitting because it is the gold standard. It is also provided to them free, has financial support from the federal government for adoption, and is backed by the federal government. Alternatives are available, but have the potential to drive up costs, or lose functionality over time if private companies go under.

We are happy to answer any questions about this or other amendments.

### **What's at stake?**

Rooftop solar is one of the best energy sources for Maryland. Because it generates clean energy that can be used on-site, rooftop solar can help to decrease dependence on fossil fuels, reduce strain on the grid, and increase the grid's resilience to threats like extreme weather and spikes in demand.

According to a [recent report from Environment Maryland Research & Policy Center and Frontier Group](#), small-scale solar energy – of which rooftop is the largest contributor – has grown rapidly in Maryland over the past ten years, producing enough electricity to power 119,694 households in 2022. While our rooftop solar progress is encouraging, we're just scratching the surface of our rooftop solar potential. The sooner we tap that potential the sooner we'll have cleaner air and a more stable climate.

**We respectfully recommend a favorable report.**

**SB1054 (HB1265) - FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Landon Fahrig

Position: FAV





# Maryland Energy Administration

**TO:** Chair Felman, Vice Chair Kagan and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

**FROM:** MEA

**SUBJECT:** SB1054 - Local Government – Building Permits for Residential Solar Energy and Residential Energy Storage Systems – Required Platform and Inspections

**DATE:** March 7, 2024

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## **MEA Position: FAVORABLE**

This bill would require a county or municipality to implement the web-based platform SolarAPP+ for features supporting the tracking and approval of residential building permits for residential solar energy projects, residential energy storage projects, and main electric panel alterations by August 1, 2025.

Jurisdictions across the US utilize various tools to expedite the permit approval process. An example is SolarAPP+, a tool developed by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) in 2021. This standardized plan review software processes building permit approvals for residential rooftop solar installations. The tool is free for cities and counties and has been shown to integrate with existing government software and cut down the permitting process by at least five to ten business days. In Maryland, Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services is already using SolarAPP+ as part of its eSolar offering to expedite the issuance of solar permits for residential rooftop solar systems.

The use of a single residential online permit processing system throughout all Maryland Local Departments of Permits and Inspections will allow residential solar installers to develop uniform permit submittals rather than have to individualize every permit to the unique requirements of the specific permitting authority. Additionally, MEA has secured federal funding to help local jurisdictions make the shift to SolarAPP+ specifically.

The SolarAPP+ is a collaborative effort to foster rooftop solar adoption by making it easier for local governments to quickly and safely approve standardized rooftop projects for installation via no-cost permitting software. For these reasons, MEA urges the committee to issue a **favorable report**.

Our sincere thanks for your consideration of this testimony. For questions or additional information, please contact Evie Schwartz directly ([evie.schwartz@maryland.gov](mailto:evie.schwartz@maryland.gov), 443.537.5538).

**MarylandLCV\_FAV\_SB1054\_RichardDeutschmann.pdf**

Uploaded by: Richard Deutschmann

Position: FAV



Kim Coble  
Executive Director

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**March 7, 2024**

**SUPPORT: SB1054 - Local Government – Building Permits for Residential Solar Energy and Residential Energy Storage Systems – Required Platform and Inspections**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Maryland LCV supports SB1054 - Local Government – Building Permits for Residential Solar Energy and Residential Energy Storage Systems – Required Platform and Inspections, and we thank Senator Kramer for his leadership on this issue.

SB1054 will reduce permitting time and expense for rooftop Solar PV systems, following a key recommendation from the Maryland Task Force to Study Solar Incentives, by adopting the DOE-developed automated permitting tool SolarAPP+.

In December 2023, The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) issued its Climate Pollution Reduction Plan, which presents a detailed roadmap to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 60% by 2031, and to achieve net zero emissions by 2045. In this plan, MDE calls for an all of society approach, where each sector of our economy will be called on to use best practices to reduce emissions. In addition, Governor Moore has announced Maryland’s commitment to 100% clean energy generation and consumption by 2035, which will require bold increases in the amount of solar energy generated in the state.

Despite the state having these strong renewable energy goals, less than 6% of Maryland homes have rooftop solar. <sup>1</sup>Currently, obtaining a permit to install solar and battery storage can take weeks, and even months. <sup>2</sup>The Solar Energy Industries Association estimates that soft costs like permitting add up to \$7,000 per site. This reduces the number of installations in the state, making our climate and resiliency goals more difficult to reach.

Solar APP+, as directed by SB1054, will help to reduce these permitting costs significantly. This system is in place in more than 230 counties and municipalities across the U.S., including Montgomery County, MD, as well as major cities such as Denver, CO, Phoenix, AZ, and Houston, TX. This has reduced permitting times to less than a day in some jurisdictions, while also relieving strain on local permitting authorities. The bottom line is that SolarAPP+ will help Maryland achieve its climate goals, increase the use of battery storage, and reduce costs for both homeowners and municipalities.

**Maryland LCV urges a Favorable report on SB1054.**

<sup>1</sup> Route-Fifty/SolarAPP+ Foundation: [Government software that shines: Solar permitting’s bright future in 2024](#)

<sup>2</sup> Solar Energy Industries Association: [SolarAPP+: Cutting the Cost of Residential Solar](#)

# **CHESSA - MD - EEE Testimony SB1054 Favorable 20240**

Uploaded by: Robin Dutta

Position: FAV



7 March 2024

Senator Brian Feldman  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
2 West  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

### **Testimony**

### **SB1054: Local Government – Building Permits for Residential Solar Energy and Residential Energy Storage Systems – Required Platform and Inspections**

#### **Position: Favorable**

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Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 1054, Local Government – Building Permits for Residential Solar Energy and Residential Energy Storage Systems – Required Platform and Inspections. I am Robin Dutta, the Executive Director of the Chesapeake Solar and Storage Association (CHESSA). Our association has over 100 member companies in the solar and energy storage industries. Many members are Maryland-based. Others are regional and national companies with an interest and/or business footprint in the state. Our purpose is to promote the mainstream adoption of local solar, large-scale solar, and battery storage throughout the electric grid to realize a stable and affordable grid for all consumers.

I am here to provide favorable testimony on SB1054, Local Government – Building Permits for Residential Solar Energy and Residential Energy Storage Systems – Required Platform and Inspections. As residential solar and battery storage systems become more popular in Maryland, local governments will need improved resources to handle permitting and inspections. This bill would open new resources for counties to serve that exact purpose, such as the SolarAPP+ digital permitting tool.

#### **Growing Need for Residential Solar and Storage**

Residential solar has the potential to be a valuable grid asset. As Marylanders fully electrify their buildings and purchase electric vehicles, they will become more reliant on the electric grid than at any previous point. The grid of the future will have the combined roles that today's grid, natural gas system, and gas stations have. For the grid to serve those roles, it will need to look and act differently. It will need to account for higher statewide electric loads, and greater electric demand in peak periods. And, the higher peak demand gets, the more expensive the electric grid becomes, due to expensive infrastructure expansion and higher peak energy pricing. If clean energy policy lowers peak demand, it lowers the cost of the grid. Residential solar and storage can mitigate that peak demand at the source.

Access to solar unlocks many more options for families. Installing solar is often done in conjunction with installing home battery storage, and when coupled solar plus storage systems can provide back-up power when the grid goes down. Electric vehicle owners are also often solar owners. Solar only, and solar plus storage systems can help lower the cost of powering electric vehicles. A [2018 study](#) from the non-profit Solar United Neighbors showed that surveyed participants were 66 percent more likely to own an electric vehicle if they owned solar. And researchers at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory [published an scholarly journal article](#) where they found that electric vehicle adoption could increase a household's likelihood of adopting solar for themselves.

This link is significant, and ties to the stability of Maryland's grid of the future. Residential solar, especially when paired with battery storage, can decrease the grid impacts of electric vehicles. It can save homeowners money on both EV charging and home energy usage. However, this link needs to be influencing energy policy, and SB1054 can help fill this gap. [In a 2023 report](#), the U.S. Department of Energy estimates that nationwide peak demand will increase by over 40 percent by 2050, largely from electric vehicle adoption. If Maryland's electric future follows anywhere near the projected national trend, it needs to step up the clean energy build-out throughout the state at the same time as handling fossil fuel retirements.

It is essential that Maryland's clean energy scale up comes at the lowest cost with the highest value. Put another way, Maryland needs to lower that runaway peak demand that could come from electric vehicle adoption. Not prioritizing such a path could burden already-burdened families with higher costs for electric grid projects that are unnecessary. When there are more distributed clean energy systems in communities, there are greater assets to increase reliability and resiliency. These solar systems can also be key grid assets that can support local energy demand and help prevent that runaway peak demand.

### **Easing the County Administrative Burden**

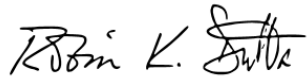
The electrification transition has begun, and legislation like SB1054 can prepare local governments to better handle this new reality. Depending on the jurisdiction, obtaining a residential solar permit can take days, weeks, or even months. Delays can be due to inefficiencies in process as well as insufficient staffing. SolarAPP+, developed at the U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory, is a software tool designed to speed up residential solar and storage permitting and review processes without sacrificing any of the necessary due diligence of the permitting process. It can fully digitize the permitting process and bring local governments into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The results can be extraordinary.

SolarAPP+ is a free resource that has seen local government adoption across the country. There are already 235 communities that have signed up for SolarAPP+ voluntarily, including Montgomery County, Maryland. On average, the processing time for a solar permit is, on average, 12 days faster in jurisdictions after they adopt and deploy SolarAPP+. On top of that, there are federal grants available to help counties adopt SolarAPP+. This bill would mandate digital solar permitting software tools by counties and local governments, but the federal resources offset any cost or training burden on the counties. The end result will be more solar, a more efficient solar permitting process, and less administrative burden for county officials.

For these reasons, CHESSA strongly supports SB1054. Achieving an equitable clean energy transition will take everyone's efforts. With SolarAPP+ digital permitting, local governments can play a big role in streamlining solar adoption and lowering costs for everyone.

Please reach out with any questions on solar and storage policy. CHESSA is here to be a resource to the committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robin K. Dutta". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Robin K. Dutta  
Executive Director (acting)  
Chesapeake Solar and Storage Association  
[robin@chessa.org](mailto:robin@chessa.org)

**SB1054-EEE\_MACo\_SWA.pdf**

Uploaded by: Dominic Butchko

Position: FWA





## Senate Bill 1054

### *Local Government – Building Permits for Residential Solar Energy and Residential Energy Storage Systems – Required Platform and Inspections*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**  
**WITH AMENDMENTS**

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment  
Committee

Date: March 7, 2024

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS SB 1054 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill mandates counties to adopt one specific tool, Solar APP+, for processing permit applications for installing solar on existing residential rooftops. MACo urges some flexibility with this requirement, consistent with the goals of the bill, if the Committee is inclined to advance this directive.

One of the core responsibilities of counties is to ensure the health and safety of Maryland residents. Counties carry out this responsibility in many ways, one of which is the enforcement of building codes and other such regulations. Residential rooftop solar carries with it two primary possible risks, the first is the stability of the rooftop itself to support solar and the second is the safety of the electrical work. Counties understand the intent of SB 1054 is to streamline the process for approving residential rooftop solar projects. To this end, counties already largely offer multiple avenues for expediting these approvals.

Counties offer the following amendments to conform the implementation of this bill with its intent and to prevent unnecessary or unintended obstacles to the deployment of rooftop solar projects.

#### **Amendment #1: Refine scenarios when counties would be required to adopt Solar APP+.**

The goal of SB 1054 is to ensure that rooftop solar applications are processed in an expedited manner. To this end, counties have identified four scenarios where the adoption of Solar APP+ would slow down this process instead of quickening it. These scenarios include: a) when a county has already invested in a permitting software to expedite permit processing, b) when a county has no requirement for permitting for rooftop solar, c) in the event that the State lacks sufficient technical or financial resources to assist counties in the conversion and operation of Solar APP+, d) or in the event Solar APP+ is no longer adequately updated or maintained.

*Amendment Language:*

On page 2, after line 26, insert,

**“(D) COUNTIES AND MUNICIPALITIES SHALL NOT BE REQUIRED TO ADOPT SOLAR APP+ IF:**

**(1) THE COUNTY OR MUNICIPALITY USES SOFTWARE THAT PROVIDES SIMILAR FUNCTIONALITY AS OUTLINED IN (C);**

**(2) THE COUNTY OR MUNICIPALITY DOES NOT REQUIRE A PERMIT FOR RESIDENTIAL SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS OR RESIDENTIAL SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS PAIRED WITH A RESIDENTIAL ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM;**

**(3) THE ADMINISTRATION LACKS SUFFICIENT FUNDING TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL OR TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO ASSIST COUNTIES AND MUNICIPALITIES IN THE ADOPTION OF SOLAR APP+; OR**

**(4) SOLAR APP+ IS NO LONGER UPDATED OR MAINTAINED.”**

**Amendment #2: Preserve flexibility to ensure public safety.**

Lines 7-11 on page 3 restrict a county’s ability to require additional inspections should a project fail its first inspection, and automatically deems a project approved 10 days after the submittal of a permit application. Both provisions potentially place public safety at risk. If any project fails an inspection in almost any environment, a follow up inspection is standard practice. Additionally, there may be a variety of scenarios where a permit may not be issued within 10 days; many of those scenarios are outside the control of counties. For context, the vast majority of these permit applications are approved in an average of 5 business days or less. In order to not interfere with public safety, counties respectfully request this language be removed.

*Amendment language:*

On page 3, STRIKE lines 7-11.

**Amendment #3: Only require the adoption of Solar APP+ so long as funding remains for the transition and implementation.**

Finally, amendment number 3 places guardrails around the adoption of Solar APP+. The major selling point highlighted by the sponsors and advocates is that there are existing state and federal resources to help counties in the transition to the use of Solar APP+. Counties simply request that it is made clear that if the Administration at some point in the future lacks the sufficient resources to assist a jurisdiction in adopting this app, that they suspend any mandated requirements under this bill.

*Amendment language:*

On page 3, in lines 20 – 21, strike “MAY” and insert “SHALL.”

Counties remain committed stakeholders in reaching Maryland’s renewable energy goals. With these practical amendments, SB 1054 will mark another positive step toward that end. For this reason, MACo urges the Committee to issue SB 1054 a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report.

# **Testimony for SB 1054.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jennifer Keener

Position: FWA

## **Written Testimony for Senate Bill 1054 – Local Government – Building Permits for Residential Solar Energy and Residential Energy Storage Systems – Required Platform and Inspections**

**Submitted by Jennifer Keener, AICP, Director, Worcester County Department of Development, Review and Permitting.**

Thank you, Chair Feldman and members of the committee, for allowing me the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 1054. My name is Jennifer Keener, and I am the director for the Department of Development, Review and Permitting in Worcester County. While I am always appreciative of suggestions to improve our permitting and inspection processes, as well as the offer of free services, I have several concerns with the bill language as drafted.

SolarAPP+ must include reasonable limitations for use beyond only those listed on the standard eligibility sheet. Properties in the floodplain must be evaluated for substantial improvement compliance under FEMA regulations, requiring a human plan review. During our demonstration of SolarAPP+, the software developers acknowledged that this platform will not cover every type of solar permit. In fact, a review of Worcester County's 2023 permits showed only 6 out of the 21 applications would have qualified under the base eligibility requirements and were outside of the floodplain. In addition, SolarAPP+ has no way of knowing whether the existing structure is properly permitted; the solar installation company is not likely to know either without consulting our staff. If a local jurisdiction finds that there is noncompliance after the software issues the permit, we must have the ability to put that permit on hold pending resolution. I also want to be sure that if implemented in our jurisdiction, we then wouldn't be penalized if a contractor chose to submit a standard permit application through our office rather than apply through the software where they are charged an additional \$25 fee.

My main concerns focus on the specified inspection components of this bill. Worcester County prioritizes building inspections, which are scheduled for in-person on the next available business day. Electrical inspections in our jurisdiction are conducted by one of several third-party agencies as selected by the electrical contractor. The 2022 SolarAPP+ Performance Review report<sup>1</sup> by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) suggests that the use of the platform "may" improve inspection pass rates, but that there is yet not enough concrete evidence, so it is a "working hypothesis". In tracking the inspection processes, it cited reasons for inspection failures as related to a work quality issue (system not installed per code), install not matching SolarAPP+ plan specifications, or the checklist not being on site. In my opinion, statutorily limiting a jurisdiction to only one inspection per component and conducting that inspection by remote video or photograph is inappropriate if a contractor is unable to perform the work accurately and according to specifications or is an overall bad actor that falsifies the documentation. Provided our inspectors (or third-party inspectors) were even able to see the work in place by one of these remote methods, should an inspection fail, we would not be able to reinspect. What happens if it is the electrical inspection that doesn't pass? That could present significant life safety issues.

The bill language is unclear in subsection (d)(4) which deems a permit approved if a jurisdiction does not conduct an inspection within 10 business days of receipt of the application. If a permit is automatically approved and issued by SolarAPP+, then there is no pre-permit inspection. Is this intended to refer to the final building and electrical inspection approvals? Many of the reasons for extending an inspection timeframe beyond 10 days are for items that are not under a local jurisdiction's control, such as delays for installation or request of an inspection by a contractor. In addition, our local permits are valid for up to one year from the date of issuance. Given this 10-day shot clock, would we then be mandated to issue an approval for work we haven't seen?

With both building and electrical inspectors are responsible for certifying that the work in place is consistent with the plans provided and is code compliant, and allowing only one inspection by type and by remote video or photograph could lead to important items being missed and could put a homeowner and their property at risk. As someone responsible for the health, safety and welfare of the citizens I work for, I respectfully request your serious reconsideration of the inspection components of this bill based on this information.

<sup>1</sup> SolarAPP+ Performance Review (2022 Data) - <https://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy23osti/85827.pdf>

# **SB 1054 Position Statement.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jimmy Tarlau

Position: FWA



# THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

(301) 952-3700  
County Council

## SUPPORT FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

**SB 1054**

**Senator Kramer**

**Local Government – Building Permits for Residential Solar Energy and Residential Energy Storage Systems**

### POSITION

### SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

The Prince George's County Council supports HB 1265 with amendments. This bill mandates counties to adopt one specific tool, Solar APP+, for processing permit applications for installing solar on existing residential rooftops. Prince George's County Council believes that there should be some flexibility with this requirement.

We understand the intent of HB 1265 is to streamline the process for approving residential rooftop solar projects. This bill is based on the recommendation of the State Task Force to Study Solar Incentives. We are facing a climate crisis and anything that can be done to move away from fossil fuel must be supported.

However, there are risks associated with the installation of solar panels. The first is the stability of the rooftop itself to support solar and the second is the safety of the electrical work. Our code enforcement people are diligent in protecting the health and safety of our residents and the workers doing the installation.

Therefore, we are supporting the amendments put forward by the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) which would 1) preserve flexibility to ensure public safety; 2) only require the adoption of SolarAPP+ so long as funding remains for the transition and implementation and 3) refine the scenarios when counties would be required to adopt SolarAPP+.

**For the reasons listed above, the Prince George's County Council supports this legislation with amendments.**

*Prepared by: Barnes International on behalf of Prince George's County Council.*

**Wayne K. Curry Administration Building – Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772**

# **SB 1054 Position Statement.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jimmy Tarlau

Position: FWA





# THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

(301) 952-3700  
County Council

## SUPPORT FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

**SB 1054**

**Senator Kramer**

**Local Government – Building Permits for Residential Solar Energy and Residential Energy Storage Systems**

### POSITION

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**For the reasons listed above, the Prince George's County Council supports this legislation with amendments.**

*Prepared by: Barnes International on behalf of Prince George's County Council.*

**Wayne K. Curry Administration Building – Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772**

**BaltimoreCounty\_UNF\_SB1054.pdf**

Uploaded by: John Olszewski

Position: UNF

JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.  
*County Executive*



JENNIFER AIOSA  
*Director of Government Affairs*

AMANDA KONTZ CARR  
*Legislative Officer*

WILLIAM J. THORNE  
*Legislative Associate*

**BILL NO.:**           **SB 1054**

**TITLE:**                Local Government – Building Permits for Residential Solar Energy and Residential Energy Storage System – Required Platform and Inspections

**SPONSOR:**           Senator Kramer

**COMMITTEE:**       Education, Energy, and the Environment

**POSITION:**         **OPPOSES**

**DATE:**               March 7, 2024

Baltimore County **OPPOSES** Senate Bill 1054 – Local Government – Building Permits for Residential Solar Energy and Residential Energy Storage Systems – Required Platform and Inspections. This legislation would require local jurisdictions to implement a web-based platform known as SolarAPP+ to track and approve residential building permits for certain residential solar energy projects.

Under SB 1054, SolarAPP+ would be required for residential solar systems, residential energy storage systems, and main electric panel upgrades. Beginning August 1, 2025, when applying for funding to the Maryland Energy Administration, the County would have to certify that it complies with the requirements of fully implementing SolarAPP+ into its processes.

It is unclear to Baltimore County how this change would benefit either the County or why one specific vendor would be pre-selected by the State for this process. Requiring local jurisdictions to utilize SolarAPP+ would add another layer to any permit review and approval that qualifies- meaning Baltimore County would be required to do twice the work to review and approve this kind of permit. This would cause a delay in the time required to issue a permit from the County.

Accordingly, Baltimore County urges a **UNFAVORABLE** report on SB 1054 from the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at [jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov](mailto:jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov).

**MML-SB 1054 -OPP.pdf**

Uploaded by: Justin Fiore

Position: UNF



Maryland Municipal League  
*The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns*

# TESTIMONY

March 7, 2024

**Committee:** Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

**Bill:** SB 1054 – Local Government – Building Permits for Residential Solar Energy and Residential Energy Storage – Required Platform and Inspections

**Position:** Unfavorable

**Reason for Position:**

The Maryland Municipal League opposes Senate Bill 1054, which mandates every local jurisdiction adopt the SolarAPP+ platform to permit residential solar installations, requires they allow remote inspections, codifies an absurd deemed-approved clause, and includes unnecessary penalties.

The League believes it would be short-sighted to require the use of a single piece of software. While it is nice that SolarAPP+ is free today, there is no guarantee that it will remain free or operational indefinitely.

The legislation also requires ALL jurisdictions to implement the SolarAPP+ platform rather than just those that currently permit residential solar. Historically, a county holds that responsibility in municipalities until a city or town develops their own program. It is unclear how many municipalities are currently permitting residential solar, but it's likely many do not have the staff to comply with the requirements of the bill.

SB 1054 further requires acceptance of video or photo inspection of installations and considers them deemed approved within 10-days if an inspection is not reviewed/completed by the jurisdiction. Together, these provisions present a danger to the homeowner or community in attached dwellings.

According to our members, remote inspections are supposed to be an alternative not the standard. There is no way to properly verify if the connection is secured, or that the amperage is correct with remote inspections. This could potentially result in a life/public safety issue.



## Maryland Municipal League

*The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns*

Municipal inspectors work to ensure the life, safety and welfare of their residents, not to allow solar panel installation companies to cut corners and speed through a process, especially because doing so could cause severe injury or even death to residents and loss of property.

Finally, the legislation includes potentially substantial penalties for non-compliance of an alternative permitting and inspection structure. We are not aware of a similar penalty provision for what is essentially a permitting preference. In totality, one of our legislative committee members defined the industry-heavy approach of this bill as “draconian.”

According to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory’s 2022 Annual Performance Review of SolarAPP+, the platform saved just 13 businesses days vs. traditional methods. If it’s a good program, local governments will pick it up with MEA support. MML will even share the opportunity for funding and support through our network. But, to mandate it for every jurisdiction – with some of these dangerous provisions included – hardly seems worth projects being completed 13 days sooner.

For these reasons, the League respectfully requests an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 1054.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Theresa Kuhns

Angelica Bailey Thupari, Esq.

Bill Jorch

Justin Fiore

Chief Executive Officer

Director, Advocacy & Public Affairs

Director, Public Policy & Research

Deputy Director, Advocacy & Public Affairs

# **SB1054 Unfavorable.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lory Ebron

Position: UNF

## COMMISSIONERS FOR SOMERSET COUNTY

11916 SOMERSET AVENUE, ROOM 111  
PRINCESS ANNE, MARYLAND 21853  
TELEPHONE 410-651-0320, FAX 410-651-0366

### COMMISSIONERS

CHARLES LAIRD, PRESIDENT  
RANDY LAIRD, VICE-PRESIDENT  
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ELDON WILLING  
DARRYL K. WEBSTER



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DEPUTY COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR  
ERNEST J. LEATHERBURY, JR.

COUNTY ATTORNEY  
KIRK G. SIMPKINS

March 6, 2024

The Honorable Senator Brian J. Feldman  
Education, Energy and the Environment Committee  
2 West  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SB1054- Local Government – Building Permits for Residential Solar Energy and Residential Energy Storage Systems – Required Platform and Inspection- **Letter of Opposition**

Dear Chairman Feldman and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Commissioners for Somerset County, this is written to express our respectful, but strong opposition to Senate Bill 1054.

First and foremost, Somerset County has repeatedly expressed our concern with mandated solar and renewable energy requirements, especially over allowing local control and siting. This bill would create additional work on staff to learn and utilize a system outside of our existing permitting software along with adding additional requirements to customers applying for permitting.

Furthermore, we do not currently support online or credit-card payments for planning and zoning fees. Mandating this would create additional work and processing that we do not feel is necessary or warranted. Allowing permitting online should be left to individual jurisdiction control to implement as they see best fit for their county.

Respectfully, we ask that you please consider our serious concerns as you review and debate SB1054.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Charles Laird', is written over a faint circular stamp.

Charles Laird  
President