



February 18, 2025

To: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Re: **SB0434**: Empowering New Energy Resources and Green Initiatives Toward a Zero-Emission (ENERGIZE) Maryland- **Favorable**

Dear Members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee of the Maryland General Assembly:

My name is John Miller. I live in Woodstock, Howard County, Maryland. I represent Chaberton Energy, a local Maryland based renewable energy developer with offices at 1700 Rockville Pike, Suite 305, Rockville, Montgomery County, Maryland. Chaberton is a leading developer in the Maryland Community Energy Generating Systems ("CSEGS") Program and was named the 34<sup>th</sup> fastest-growing private company and 1<sup>st</sup> fastest-growing community solar company in the United States on the 2024 Inc. 5000.

Chaberton Energy was built upon the framework that the State set up with the Community Solar Program. In nearly five years, we have grown and now employ over 50 people, with 20 located in Maryland. We have multiple solar projects operating in Maryland, as well as a robust pipeline of projects in construction and development.

The projects we develop deliver real and tangible benefits to your constituents, the residents of Maryland. We save Marylanders an average of \$150 annually per household on their utility costs; and each Community Solar project supports well over \$2.5M in savings for subscribers, all of whom reside in Maryland and many of whom are Low to Moderate Income (LMI) subscribers. As an industry, we support ensuring the benefits of solar energy flow to those who need it most. The energy bill savings we can offer to LMI subscribers are often even greater and provide a necessary lifeline to those struggling to meet basic needs, including increased energy costs.

The most recent report on the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) shows that the State is well behind in meeting its energy goals. Specifically, per the latest report for 2023, the State only met ~44% of its obligations of RPS, which led to over \$320M in alternative compliance penalty payments levied on the utilities. It will be necessary for Maryland to meet, and exceed, its clean energy goals to ensure a safe, reliable, cost effective, and equitable energy policy. According to data from the Energy Information Administration, Maryland consumes almost six times more energy than it produces, and according to the Ten Year Plan produced by the Public Service Commission, Maryland imports approximately 40% of its electricity consumption, meaning that the State is very reliant on energy which Maryland does not generate. This issue has been recently exacerbated by the PJM capacity auction which has already begun to have significant financial impacts on the energy bills for all Marylanders. The optimal kilowatt-hour is one that is both produced and consumed in Maryland.



We commend the Administration, President Ferguson, and Senators Brooks, Ellis, and Watson in addressing the needs of the State through the ENERGIZE Maryland Act. Making the shift from a 'Renewable Portfolio Standard' to a 'Clean Energy Standard' increases the flexibility the State has to implement clean energy and address the impacts of climate change. As stated in the Act, the current RPS and Offshore Wind Leases are insufficient for the State to reach its goals, and we support increased efforts to generate clean electricity in Maryland. Providing additional certainty on the value of the Alternative Compliance Payment will spur additional development of clean energy projects in the State, and this additional project development activity will lead to increased economic growth, job creation, and a cleaner environment in Maryland.

Support for clean energy is support for a strong local job market. The 2024 U.S. Energy & Employment Jobs Report ("USEER") from the U.S Department of Energy finds that in 2023 jobs in clean energy grew at more than twice the rate of the overall labor market. The clean energy job market also delivers higher representation than average among Veterans, as well as the Latino and Hispanic population. This report lists 82,926 clean energy jobs in Maryland, representing 4.7% of total state employment, but does show a lower-than-average growth rate of 1.8% from 2022 – 2023. However, the expected growth for Maryland is higher than average, showing that the investments made into the clean energy economy in Maryland are succeeding, and continued support for clean energy is a key contributor to good jobs and a strong economy.

In order to keep building on the successes of Maryland, and to keep fostering jobs for a strong local economy, stimulating tax revenue, saving the people of Maryland money on their energy bills, it is imperative that the State take a proactive approach to its energy needs. We ask that the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee issue a favorable report on SB 0434.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Miller  
Chaberton Energy  
Vice President of Development