

**Thursday, April 3, 2025**

**TO:** Brian Feldman, Chair of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee; and Committee Members

**FROM:** Humna Sharif, The Nature Conservancy, Climate Adaptation Manager; and Michelle Dietz, The Nature Conservancy, Director of Government Relations

**POSITION:** Support HB 1111 Public Utilities – Solar Energy Generating Systems – Floating Systems and 3 Systems Located on Brownfields

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) supports HB 1111 Public Utilities – Solar Energy Generating Systems – Floating Systems and Systems Located on Brownfields offered by Delegate Fraser-Hidalgo. TNC is a global conservation organization working to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. In Maryland, our work focuses on delivering science-based, on-the-ground solutions that secure clean water and healthy living environments for our communities, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and increasing resilience in the face of a changing climate. TNC supports legislation that provides a path forward to address resource adequacy in Maryland to meet current and future electric load requirements and to alleviate the burden on ratepayers. We urgently need more energy, but we also need that energy to be clean and readily available.

HB 1111 seeks to incentivize development of solar generation in the state by including floating solar in the Small Solar Energy Generating System Incentive Program. The Small Solar Energy Generating System Incentive currently applies to a system with a generating capacity of between 20 kilowatts and 5 megawatts and includes systems located in parking lots, over rooftops, and on brownfields. HB 1111 expands the existing program to include floating solar located on non-navigable bodies of water in the state.

This bill exempts brownfields and floating solar systems from specified valuation and property taxes. Currently, nonresidential solar energy generating systems that are constructed on buildings' rooftops or on parking facilities are exempted from property taxes. HB 1111 authorizes the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore City or the governing body of a county or municipal corporation to grant a tax credit against the county or municipal corporation property tax imposed on a nonresidential solar energy generating system constructed on a brownfield, a water retention pond, or a quarry.

This bill aligns with the Moore-Miller Administration's goal of achieving a 100% clean energy standard for Maryland. Clean energy can be produced cheaper and safer than non-renewable energy generation methods. By enacting HB1111, small scale floating solar and brownfield systems can contribute to Maryland's ambitious clean energy goals.

We need to urgently reduce Maryland's dependance on fossil fuels; they not only pollute our environment, but also have adverse health impacts for Maryland's residents. The Nature Conservancy thanks Delegate Fraser-Hidalgo for introducing this legislation, and for his leadership towards Maryland's swift and secure transition to a fully clean energy future.

**Therefore, we urge a favorable report on HB 1111.**