

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2023 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
Third Reader - Revised

Senate Bill 235

(Senator West)

Budget and Taxation

Appropriations

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School Buildings - Solar and Geothermal Technology

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This bill requires local school systems to include, during the design development phase for the construction or major renovation of a public school building, an evaluation of the use of solar technologies (including the installation of solar panels on the roof of the school) and the use of geothermal heating and cooling systems. If a local school system determines that solar technologies or geothermal heating and cooling systems are not appropriate for a specific project, it must submit a report to the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC) explaining why they are not appropriate. An annual IAC reporting requirement is adjusted accordingly. IAC may not delay the approval of a school construction project if an evaluation document is not submitted in a timely manner, and it may adopt regulations to implement the bill. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2023, and applies to school construction projects that have initiated design document development on or after that date.**

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** None. IAC can implement the bill with existing budgeted resources. No effect on revenues.

**Local Effect:** Local school systems already conduct assessments of solar technology and may be able to incorporate reviews of geothermal heating and cooling systems, as well as any additional reporting requirements, with existing budgeted resources. To the extent the reviews are more complex than anticipated, local expenditures may increase minimally to conduct them. No effect on local revenues.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal.

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## Analysis

**Current Law:** IAC must adopt regulations that require that design development documents for the construction or major renovation of school buildings include:

- an evaluation of the use of solar technologies, including photovoltaic or solar water heating, based on life cycle costs; and
- if an evaluation determines that solar technologies are not appropriate for a new school or major renovation of a school, an explanation of why the technology is not appropriate.

By December 31 of each year, IAC must submit a report to the Governor and the General Assembly on the number of public school construction and major renovation projects in each jurisdiction that use solar technologies.

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### Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

**Designated Cross File:** HB 300 (Delegate Bhandari, *et al.*) - Appropriations.

**Information Source(s):** Public School Construction Program; Maryland State Department of Education; Baltimore City Public Schools; Baltimore County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 30, 2023  
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