

HOUSE BILL 460

M5, C5

6lr1862

By: **Delegates Beauchamp, Adams, Anderson, Arentz, Baker, Bouchat, Buckel, Ciliberti, Ghrist, Griffith, Hartman, Hinebaugh, Hornberger, Howard, Hutchinson, Jacobs, Kipke, R. Long, Mangione, McComas, Miller, T. Morgan, Nkongolo, Pippy, Reilly, Rose, Schmidt, Tomlinson, Valentine, and Wivell**

Introduced and read first time: January 23, 2026

Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Solar Energy – Construction of Generating Stations in Priority Preservation**
3 **Areas and Study**

4 FOR the purpose of reducing the percentage of priority preservation area acreage that may
5 be used for the construction of certain solar energy generating stations; requiring
6 the Maryland Department of the Environment to study the environmental impact of
7 the disposal of solar photovoltaic systems; and generally relating to solar energy.

8 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
9 Article – Public Utilities
10 Section 7–218(h)(1)
11 Annotated Code of Maryland
12 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

13 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
14 Article – Public Utilities
15 Section 7–218(h)(4)
16 Annotated Code of Maryland
17 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

18 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
19 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

20 **Article – Public Utilities**

21 7–218.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(h) (1) Except as provided in paragraphs (3) and (4) of this subsection, a local jurisdiction may not:

(i) adopt zoning laws or other laws or regulations that prohibit the construction or operation of solar energy generating stations; or

(ii) deny site development plans for solar energy generating stations that meet the requirements of subsection (f) of this section.

(4) (i) The total combined number of solar energy generating stations that may be approved for construction in a priority preservation area that was established before January 1, 2025, shall:

1. be limited in area to **[5%] 2%** of the total acreage of the priority preservation area;

2. be located in the project area within the priority preservation area; and

3. meet all requirements under this section.

(ii) The prohibitions in paragraph (1) of this subsection do not apply to the remaining **[95%] 98%** of a priority preservation area once the **[5%] 2%** limitation under subparagraph (i) of this paragraph has been achieved for the priority preservation area.

(iii) A county shall report to the Commission when the **[5%] 2%** limitation under subparagraph (i) of this paragraph has been achieved for a priority preservation area.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That:

(a) The Maryland Department of the Environment shall study the environmental impact of the disposal of solar photovoltaic systems at the end of their life cycle.

(b) On or before September 30, 2027, the Maryland Department of the Environment shall report its findings under subsection (a) of this section to the General Assembly in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2026.