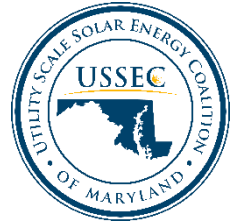


UTILITY-SCALE SOLAR ENERGY COALITION OF MARYLAND



Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

February 11, 2020

Renewable Energy Development and Siting (REDS) – Evaluations and Tax and Fee Exemptions (SB 281)

Support with Amendments

Chairman Pinsky and members of the Committee, the Utility-Scale Solar Energy Coalition of Maryland (USSEC) comprises solar energy developers dedicated to responsible development of solar energy generation in Maryland.

USSEC supports those elements of REDS that provide incentives for solar development on brownfields and other contaminated sites and applaud the Hogan Administration for their efforts to address development constraints on these kinds of sites.

USSEC opposes SB 281's unrelated changes to the Public Utilities section of Maryland statute as they pertain to the state CPCN permitting process. Maryland's CPCN process is one of the most cumbersome and costly state permitting processes in the country, and certain provisions of SB 281 could make it even more so.

The Public Utilities amendments in SB 281 are trying to solve a problem that does not currently exist. These amendments are unnecessary because CPCNs are already subject to a standard permitting condition that require projects to stay within a pre-determined limit of disturbance ("LOD") within which the subject project retains sufficient flexibility to make certain changes without requiring a re-hearing by the PSC. The PSC already has authority to review significant changes and exercises that authority regularly. SB 281 would unnecessarily restrict the PSC's discretion and create the potential for strict interpretation that would unreasonably further encumber an already cumbersome permitting process.

USSEC encourages this Committee to strip out the Public Utilities amendments in SB 281 and otherwise whole-heartedly support this bill.

We thank you for your consideration.

Submitted on behalf of USSEC:

Isaac Meyer, Compass Government Relations Partners