

**Testimony of
Frances Yuhas
Submitted to the
MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Finance Committee
SB0407 - Electricity – Net Energy Metering – Limit
February 2, 2021**

Dear Madam Chair and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony for the Committee’s consideration.

My name is Frances Yuhas, I am a lifelong Maryland resident and have been working in the solar energy industry in Maryland since 2005. I am a project manager representing TurningPoint Energy (TPE), a board member of Chesapeake Solar & Storage Association (CHESSA, formerly known as MDVSEIA) and a Maryland committee co-chair for the Coalition for Community Solar Access (CCSA).

We are very much in support of this bill. I would like to highlight a few important aspects of the renewable energy landscape in Maryland and solar energy in particular and why SB407, increasing the net metering cap, complements these initiatives.

TurningPoint Energy has been successful in developing community solar projects in Years 1 through Year 3 of the Community Solar Pilot Program. As a project developer and we have been fortunate enough to work in Maryland since the Community Solar Energy Generating System (CSEGS) Pilot Program’s inception, having developed some of the first projects to be allocated capacity in the program.

As a Maryland resident, I would like to continue to work in the solar energy industry in Maryland. Now more than ever, it is critical to our business investment in Maryland that we see a meaningful expansion of the net energy metering (NEM) program in order to continue investment in the state. Most important, ***investment that specifically provides benefits to the communities*** within which we build projects – economic development, job creation, increased property tax revenue, electricity cost savings to electricity users (ratepayers), and community investment as a natural extension of TPE’s philanthropic initiatives.

We must evaluate our commitment just like any other business who considers Maryland to be a prudent investment decision. I would like to be able to continue to work here rather than in another state. Our neighboring states of Pennsylvania and Virginia are very viable and favorable solar markets.

Our company’s continued investment in Maryland is predicated on market growth as we base decisions to invest resources and personnel on long-term market viability.

Community Solar markets in other states that have meaningful growth targets tied to a state RPS, as an example, are more attractive to developers and therefore will invest their personnel and investment resources in those states/markets. If we **add certainty to the market** by increasing the NEM cap, solar companies would make a commitment to invest in the Maryland market to ensure projects are built to support Maryland's renewable energy goals.

Maryland has set ambitious renewable portfolio standard (RPS) goals, however the current cap on the net metering program does not incentivize continued investment in the market to build a project pipeline to contribute to those RPS targets – we need certainty that a project will be accepted and allowed to participate as net-metered projects in balance with other distributed generation projects like residential and small commercial rooftop projects as well as projects to support farm operations.

I am also fortunate to be have been able to install my own rooftop solar project way back in 2005. My mother, a senior citizen who is on a fixed income is not able to access solar energy because her home does not have a suitable roof structure. However, she would like to purchase solar generated energy just as thousands of other Marylanders who are in a similar situation would like to do so. I have many friends and colleagues in similar situations.

Fifty to 75% of American households are not in a position to host a solar array of their own. I want people to have the same opportunity as I have to access solar generated electricity. But we must allow projects to be built to fulfill the intentions of Maryland's renewable energy goals. Those unable to install their own rooftop system can subscribe to community solar projects.

Our enthusiasm in Maryland is high! TPE currently has projects under construction, nearing completion or in development in Baltimore, Prince George's, Garrett and Montgomery counties including projects in the low to moderate income (LMI) category. I personally look forward to subscribing to one of our projects located in BGE's territory project soon.

Please support the net-metering program cap increase from 1,500 to 3,000 MW that SB407 proposes to allow continued industry momentum and to reinvigorate the stagnant deployment of solar projects due to uncertainty in the solar energy market!

Thank you,

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