

SB330: State-Funded Construction and Major Renovations Projects - Solar Panels - Requirement

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

January 21, 2021

Positon: Favorable

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Committee,

As Maryland strives towards clean energy goals, smart solar siting is a critical facet that needs to be addressed. Clean Water Action supports initiatives that remove barriers and incentivize solar siting on impervious surfaces, to increase the state's capacity to develop solar power capacity while minimizing negative externalities on water quality, local ecosystems, and Maryland's agricultural economy. SB330 smooths the way to solar siting on state-funded buildings.

Clean Water Action encourages that solar siting be prioritized on impervious and unproductive lands, like rooftops, parking lots, and brownfields. We discourage development on forests and productive farmland, and appreciate how SB330 seeks to make rooftops more accessible to solar installation. Solar on rooftop, especially large rooftops, is a win-win: it produces energy on an area of land while other activities take place in the building below, instead of displacing other uses of that land as happens when solar is built on farmland, forests, or wetlands. This bill also targets the most cost-effective time to ensure that buildings are compatible with large-scale solar power, by requiring it during construction.

Ensuring that state-funded construction and major renovations are compatible with solar panels and a great first step to ensuring that, moving forward, it is easier and cheaper to install rooftop solar. By targeting buildings during the design and build stage, the state can encourage state-funded projects to play an important role in helping Maryland meet its clean energy goals without displacing forests or productive farms.

Thank you,

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