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Committee: Senate Budget and Taxation

Testimony on: HB 1039 "Property Tax - Community Solar Energy Generating Systems - Agrivoltaics"

Position: Support

Hearing Date: March 29, 2022

Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

CleanChoice Energy submits this testimony in support of HB 1039, introduced by Delegate Luedtke, which provides incentives for community solar facilities developed on preferred sites like rooftops, brownfields, landfills or clean fill sites, as well as dual-use agricultural land.

CleanChoice Energy is a mission-driven renewable energy company based in Washington, D.C.. As a community solar services provider, we provide support for more than 20 megawatts of community solar projects in Maryland, benefitting over 5,000+ Maryland households annually through community solar subscriptions.

As part of Maryland's Community Solar Pilot Program, these projects enable Maryland residents to save up to 10 percent on their utility bills based on electricity generated by the projects. These projects, located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Dorchester, Howard and Prince George's counties, are also pollinator-friendly solar farms, which support the landowners' habitats and pollinator populations. Under HB 1039, these dual-use sites, also known as agrivoltaics (i.e. a site that simultaneously uses the land for both solar power generation and agriculture) would be incentivized through personal property tax exemptions.

Maryland, like many other states, is figuring out the right balance between the need to rapidly transition the state's energy sector to 100% clean energy with the state's conservation and agricultural goals. These incentives will provide the needed market mechanisms to make siting community solar projects on these preferred sites attractive to developers, while reducing the strain on other available land and site origination practices.

This minor change to the community solar program will allow more efficient solar development in Maryland, directing community solar projects to rooftops, brownfields, landfills, clean fill and dual-use sites first.

We respectfully ask for a favorable report on HB 1039. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Rachel Smucker

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