



**Testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 683 – Renewable Energy for
Nonprofit Organizations Loan Program
Budget and Taxation Committee
March 2, 2022**

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington (JCRC) serves as the public affairs and community relations arm of the Jewish community. We represent over 100 Jewish organizations and synagogues throughout Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The JCRC is strongly committed to cultivating a society based on freedom, justice, and pluralism. We work tirelessly throughout the entire Greater Washington area to advocate for our agencies that serve the most vulnerable residents, support our Jewish day schools and community centers, and to campaign for important policy interests on behalf of the entire Jewish community.

The JCRC has a long history of favoring policies which protect the environment and reverse climate change. Our agency is committed to addressing the need to protect our environment – public lands, water, and air and, in particular, the critical, indeed, existential threats climate change poses to our world.

Senate Bill 683 aligns with our efforts to support renewable energy sources and assists our nonprofit agencies in achieving that goal. The Bill establishes the Renewable Energy for Nonprofit Organizations Loan Program in the Maryland Energy Administration and authorizes nonprofit organizations to apply for and obtain loans from the Program for the purchase and installation of qualifying renewable energy systems. Additionally, SB 683 establishes the Renewable Energy for Nonprofit Organizations Loan Fund as a special, nonlapsing fund, and requires the Governor to provide \$5 million dollars for the Fund in the annual budget bill for FY2024-2026.

The climate is changing in alarming and rapid ways and the causes stem from human behaviors, many of which are within our power to change. We firmly believe that the Jewish community—in fact, all communities—must act unequivocally to protect nature and the environment from further harm and to ameliorate, to the extent possible, the effects of harms we can no longer prevent. In order to help nonprofit organizations, fight climate change, it is essential that they receive financial assistance to purchase and install proper renewable energy systems. For these reasons, we ask the committee to give a favorable report on SB 683.