



Renewable Energy for Nonprofit Organizations (RENO) Loan Program

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Wednesday, March 2, 2022 | 1pm

Chair Guzzone and Vice Chair Rosapepe:

In 1964, two groups looking for a spiritual home in Bowie, MD found each other, and these 18 families became the heart of what is now Temple Solel. From this foundation, we have grown into a connected community made special by the diversity of our membership, collectively focused on the development of Jewish spiritual life, love of learning, and “Tikkun Olam”-- repairing the world.

Our role from creation has been to be “good shepherds” of the earth. With this in mind, our Social Action Committee has been hyper-focused on finding ways to reduce our carbon footprint both within and outside our synagogue. Though we’ve taken small steps, including switching to motion-sensor lights, we know we want and need to make a bigger impact.

Unfortunately, the stuck point for all nonprofits is clear. Because we cannot benefit from tax incentives, switching to renewable energy is a great hurdle. In fact, we were recently quoted over \$85,000 to install solar panels on our property. We simply do not have the cash flow to support this kind of endeavor, and no fundraiser we host could possibly bring in the funds to carry the project.

Note: There’s one option for nonprofits that want to go solar-- entering a Power Purchase Agreement. However, this involved allowing another business to own infrastructure on our property, which is not appealing or “kosher” for our community.

We are grateful to Senator Kagan, the Senator for the nonprofit sector, who heard our needs and concerns. By taking this issue seriously, she was able to craft a solution that will benefit not only our synagogue but nonprofit organizations across the state. SB683 would create a revolving fund that would provide interest-free loans for nonprofits to shift to renewable infrastructure. We would finally be able to carry out our desired shift to solar energy, with only a need for 10% upfront costs. \$8,500 is something that our congregation likely **could** fundraise and support for an important shift such as this.

On top of the moral and environmental reasons for supporting this bill, Temple Solel and other nonprofits that receive a loan will realize lower utility bills. This piece is key, as we are a small congregation with financial need.

It is important to lead by example, and we are hopeful that by taking “green” initiatives, our members will begin to do the same.

We urge a favorable report on SB683.

Respectfully Submitted,

Temple Solel Executive Board