



HB440 – Electricity - Community Solar Energy Generating Systems - Generating Capacity

Testimony before

House Economic Matters Committee

February 10, 2022

Position: Favorable

Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Richard Deutschmann, and I represent the 750+ members of Indivisible Howard County. We are providing written testimony today in **support of HB440**, to raise the generating capacity of community solar projects in the state. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We appreciate the leadership of Delegate Clippinger for sponsoring this important legislation.

Community Solar has been a very successful program here in Maryland, as it has been in numerous states across the country. According to the Solar Energy Industries Association, there are now more than 3,600MW of Community Solar projects operating in the United States, as of 3Q21. It fills a gap for subscribers to be able to utilize the benefits of solar energy, even if they cannot use onsite solar because of lack of home ownership, economic status, or configuration issues such as shaded property. Community Solar helps the state to realize its goal of bringing 1000's of MW of clean energy online, as we reduce our use of fossil fuels to lower greenhouse gas emissions. Finally, Community Solar has the potential to reach 1000's of low to moderate income (LMI) subscribers, with savings on energy bills that will help those who need it most.

However, Community Solar will never reach its potential in Maryland, as long as the maximum system size is capped at 2MWdc. This small system size forces developers and community solar retailers to spread the high fixed costs such as legal and entitlements, over to the cost per kwh it can deliver to the subscriber. In addition, the cost per MW to develop and build the smaller system size is much higher than that of a larger, 5MWdc project. Increasing the maximum system size will bring Maryland in line with many other northeastern states that have larger system size caps, and enjoy thriving Community Solar markets.

For these reasons, we support the goals of HB440, as critical in building a strong Community Solar market in Maryland. Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable committee report.

Richard Deutschmann
Columbia, MD 21045