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March 2, 2022

The Honorable Kumar Barve
Chair, Environment and Transportation
Maryland House of Delegates
251 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Dana Stein
Vice Chair, Environment and Transportation
Maryland House of Delegates
251 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

On behalf of Chesapeake Conservancy, I write to express Chesapeake Conservancy's position on HB 936 as **Favorable – with amendments** and to ask for your support for the following suggested amendment:

Section 1(b)(6)(x) one representative of Chesapeake Conservancy

The Blue Ribbon Community Solar Land Use Commission would fulfill an important role in studying and providing recommendations about land use needs to meet the full generation capacity authorized under the Community Solar Energy Generating Systems Pilot Program. Given this role, Chesapeake Conservancy believes that the Commission would greatly benefit from the addition of an organization with expertise in geospatial data science and analysis, specifically related to land cover and land use data in Maryland.

As an organization that includes a team of 13 geospatial specialists, and including two data scientists, Chesapeake Conservancy would like to respectfully recommend the addition of our organization to this important commission.

Chesapeake Conservancy is contracted with the Chesapeake Bay Program by the US EPA and works in partnership with the U.S. Geological Survey and the University of Vermont to provide new land cover, land use and change datasets at 1-meter resolution for the entire Chesapeake Bay watershed (including the full Maryland state boundary). This data will be released later this month (March 2022).

Leveraging advanced geospatial data and tools, Chesapeake Conservancy has completed research on optimal solar siting opportunities for the City of Baltimore and Baltimore County and for St. Mary's County:

<https://www.chesapeakeconservancy.org/2021/04/14/report-st-marys-county-can-meet-renewable-solar-energy-goals-with-smart-siting-wise-land-use/>

<https://www.chesapeakeconservancy.org/2020/10/20/report-maryland-can-meet-renewable-solar-energy-goals-through-wise-land-use/>

This research has helped to inform other statewide initiatives related to land use and solar siting. In 2020, Chesapeake Conservancy contributed to the work of Governor Hogan's Renewable Energy Development and Siting Task Force by presenting on optimal siting for land use and equity:

<https://governor.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Solar-Siting-for-Baltimore-County-and-City-Conservation-Innovation-Center-June-12-2020.pdf>

We are currently conducting research on land use changes associated with ground-based solar energy development in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and will submit our manuscript in April 2022.

Chesapeake Conservancy supports the acceleration of solar deployment in Maryland and across the Chesapeake Bay watershed in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate negative impacts of global climate change. The Conservancy believes the deployment of data to inform solar siting reveals significant opportunities to minimize land use tradeoffs in achieving renewable energy goals.

Thank you for your leadership on this important legislation, and thank you for your consideration of our requested amendment.

Sincerely,



Joel Dunn
President and CEO
Chesapeake Conservancy