



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

Senate Bill 110

Electricity – Community Solar Energy Generating Systems – Generating Capacity

Date: February 1, 2022

Position: **Support**

To: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs

From: Doug Myers, Maryland Senior Scientist

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** SB110 which raises the capacity of community solar definition from 2 to 5 Megawatts. This policy change should increase general support for community solar by raising the cap of total electricity generating capacity that can come from these installations.

Community Solar Energy Generating Systems are designed to encourage neighborhood-scale adoption of solar energy in a distributed fashion rather than utility-scale facilities. Solar power, like other electricity generating systems, is most efficient and loses less energy when generated close to where it will be used. The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) estimates that electricity transmission and distribution (T&D) losses equaled about 5% of the electricity transmitted and distributed in the United States in 2016 through 2020.¹

Community Solar Generating Systems usually consist of solar panels affixed to rooftops for residential and small-scale commercial buildings where the bulk of the generated electricity will be used. This lessens the energy bills of that home or business and generally supports the grid when excess energy is generated. This prevents the need for new power plant construction and the additional work to subsequently reduce their associated greenhouse gas emissions.

As the demand for solar energy increases, large utility scale operations are being proposed that threaten farmland and forests. Clearing forests to install panels and transmission infrastructure could have significant negative impacts on local streams. For this reason, raising the cap on community solar systems will help meet Maryland's greenhouse gas reduction goals while protecting our forests, farmland and streams.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on SB 110. For more information, please contact Robin Clark, Maryland Staff Attorney at rclark@cbf.org and 443.995.8753.

¹ [How much electricity is lost in electricity transmission and distribution in the United States?](#), US Energy Information Administration, last updated: November 4, 2021.

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