



**Committee: Ways & Means**

**Testimony on: SB264 - Community Solar Energy Generation**

**Systems-Exemption From Energy & Property Taxes**

**Organization: Climate Justice Wing of the Maryland Legislative Coalition**

**Submitting: Diana Younts, Co-Chair**

**Position: Favorable**

**Hearing Date: March 29, 2022**

Dear M. Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of SB264. The Maryland Legislative Coalition (MLC) Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of over 50 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on SB264.

This bill provides an exemption to certain local personal property taxes for community solar projects that provide at least 50% of their energy production to low and moderate income households and that also provide that energy at 20% lower cost than the energy provided by the local utility to those households.

Community solar projects are a critical component to meeting Maryland's climate goals and targets because they provide renewable energy to families and building owners that cannot otherwise install or afford solar energy and because such projects increase the amount of clean, renewable energy on the grid. Anyone who receives an electric bill can benefit from community solar including renters, residents in multi-unit buildings, municipalities, nonprofits and businesses that don't own their roofs.

Incentivizing community solar for low and moderate income families and communities is essential to energy justice for these families who already pay disproportionately higher utility bills than other households. Because energy is a regressive cost, low-income households in Maryland dedicate 13% of their annual incomes to energy costs and pay 550% more as a percent of income than non low-income households. The majority of these (55%) are Black, Hispanic, or Asian households. Providing low cost solar energy to these families helps to redress this problem. Equitable and just deployment of renewable energy is critical to expanding our clean energy economy and addressing environmental injustice.

Energy is also a substantial cost for building owners and managers, so the availability of low cost community solar is an important means of preserving affordable housing.

In short, incentivizing community solar for low and moderate income families is good for the environment and good for families who need help with their energy costs as well.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report for SB264.

**MLC Climate Justice Wing:**

Assateague Coastal Trust  
Maryland Legislative Coalition  
MD Campaign for Environmental Human Rights  
Chesapeake Climate Action Network  
WISE  
Frack Free Frostburg  
Mountain Maryland Movement  
Clean Water Action  
Howard County Indivisible  
Howard County Sierra Club  
Columbia Association Climate Change and Sustainability Advisory Committee  
HoCo Climate Action  
CHEER  
Climate XChange - Maryland  
Mid-Atlantic Field Representative/  
National Parks Conservation Association  
350 Montgomery County  
Glen Echo Heights Mobilization  
The Climate Mobilization Montgomery County  
Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions  
Montgomery Countryside Alliance  
Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee  
Audubon Naturalist Society  
Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church  
Environmental Justice Ministry  
Coalition For Smarter Growth

DoTheMostGood Montgomery County  
MCPS Clean Energy Campaign  
MoCo DCC  
Potomac Conservancy  
Casa de Maryland  
Nuclear Information & Resource Service  
Clean Air Prince Georges  
Laurel Resist  
Greenbelt Climate Action Network  
Maryland League of Conservation Voters  
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland  
Concerned Citizens Against Industrial CAFOs  
Wicomico NAACP  
Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility  
Chispa MD  
Climate Law & Policy Project  
Maryland Poor People's Campaign  
Labor Network for Sustainability  
The Nature Conservancy  
Clean Air Prince Georges  
350 Baltimore  
Maryland Environmental Health Network  
Climate Stewards of Greater Annapolis  
Talbot Rising  
Adat Shalom Climate Action  
Mid-Atlantic Earth Holders  
Climate Parents of Prince Georges  
Echotopia

Maryland NAACP State Conference,  
Environmental Justice Committee