



HB76 – Community Solar Energy Generating Systems - Exemption From Energy and Property Taxes

Testimony before

House Ways and Means Committee

January 19, 2022

Position: Favorable

Madame 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 HB76**, to lower the tax burden on Community Solar systems that serve LMI (Low & Moderate Income) communities. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We appreciate the leadership of Del. Smith for sponsoring this important legislation.

This bill is a win-win for both equity for our LMI citizens and communities, as well as supporting strong solutions for global climate change. HB76 does this by eliminating the tax burden on rooftop, parking lot and brownfield community solar projects that benefit LMI households, which are typically more expensive to develop than that of greenfield development in rural areas. Traditionally this has meant that LMI communities have had limited access to these projects being built in their communities, and for LMI citizens to participate in a program designed to lower their energy cost burden. This in turn will increase project development and construction of community solar in our LMI communities, bringing jobs and economic benefits to areas traditionally overburdened by environmental pollutants.

For these reasons, we believe that this legislation embodies the very essence of Climate Justice, and is the kind of solution that can make Maryland a leader in addressing inequities in our LMI communities while moving boldly on climate solutions.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable committee report.

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