



January 19, 2022

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

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

The below-signed organizations strongly support HB76: Community Solar Energy Generating Systems - Exemption from Personal Property Taxes. This bill is a top priority for Maryland League of Conservation Voters and we thank Delegate Smith for her leadership on this important issue.

Maryland needs to advance community solar projects especially in Low- to Moderate-Income Communities. The proposed bill exempts projects in Low- to Moderate-Income (LMI) communities from county or municipal personal property tax when more than half of the power generated by the projects is reserved for LMI households, and when they are installed on rooftops, parking lots, or brownfields.

The community solar pilot program has the potential to reduce the energy burden of thousands of LMI income Maryland households while generating solar power on the rooftops and parking canopies of our cities and towns. Currently, it is not financially viable to develop smaller rooftop and parking canopy community solar projects for LMI benefit. We need to both remove financial disincentives and provide financial incentives if we are to encourage the development of these types of projects that provide discounted clean energy to LMI households, create local jobs, and mitigate carbon emissions.

This bill:

- Exempts projects from county or municipal personal property tax for community solar projects that reserve more than 50% of their power for the benefit of low-to-moderate income households, and which are installed on rooftops, parking lots, or brownfields.
- Encourages solar generation in communities that are burdened by environmental pollutants and helps provide assistance to low- to moderate-income households.

- Will help to overcome the greater costs associated with developing projects serve low-income customers, and those that are located on land that has already been developed (rooftops, parking lots, landfills, etc.),

We are attaching to this testimony additional information about this important program, its needs and benefits, and urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Maryland League of Conservation Voters

Annapolis Green

Chesapeake Bay Foundation

Chesapeake Climate Action Network

Climate Reality Howard County

Climate Reality Montgomery County

Elders Climate Action Maryland

Greenbelt Climate Action Network

Howard County Climate Action

Maryland Climate X-Change

Maryland Conservation Council

Maryland Legislative Coalition/Climate Justice Wing

Safe Skies Maryland

Sierra Club - Maryland

Solar Democracy and Equity Collaborative

Solar United Neighbors

Strong Future Maryland