



PRESERVATION MARYLAND

January 19, 2022

Dear Madame Chair and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

On behalf of the staff and Board of Directors of Preservation Maryland and our thousands of statewide supporters, I would like to offer our support of HB76.

Through our Smart Growth Maryland program, Preservation Maryland advocates for a more environmentally and economically sustainable future that creates opportunities for all Marylanders through better development patterns.

SUPPORT FOR HOUSE BILL 76

Preservation Maryland emphatically supports HB76, which would help to overcome the greater costs associated with developing community solar projects to serve low-income customers. This would be achieved by exempting such projects that benefit low-to-moderate income (LMI) households from county or municipal personal property tax. While it is not currently financially viable to develop rooftop and parking canopy community solar projects that provide discounted solar energy in LMI areas, we believe HB27 would help to encourage solar generation in those communities that are burdened by environmental pollutants and provide assistance to LMI households.

In addition to addressing equity, the exemption encourages siting for those community solar projects on land that has already been developed by including projects that are installed on rooftops, parking lots, roadways, or brownfields. This is important not only for our state's urban and suburban communities with little to no undeveloped land left, but it also helps to emphasize the point that green projects should not destroy green resources (i.e. forests, farmland, etc.).

A defining tenet of both smart growth and historic preservation is investing in the already built environment, in our existing communities. To make certain we are working towards a more sustainable future for *all* Marylanders, much of our work at Preservation Maryland is focused on ensuring that community investment projects can move forward in LMI areas, something that is often achieved through incentives such as those that would be created through HB76. We believe that invaluable work could be accomplished through this legislation in the communities in Maryland that need it the most.

That is why we respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on House Bill 76. Thank you for you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elly Colmers Cowan".

Elly Colmers Cowan
Director of Government Relations