

## TESTIMONY FOR HB 76

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Stephanie Smith

Committee: Ways and Means

Organization Submitting: Lower Shore Progressive Caucus

Person Submitting: Sam Harvey

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB 76 on behalf of the Lower Shore Progressive Caucus. The Caucus is a political and activist organization on the Eastern Shore, unaffiliated with any political party, committed to empowering working people by building a Progressive Movement.

Caucus members support environmental justice, recognizing that certain low- and moderate-income communities have been literally dumped on, by industry and society generally. This seems especially unjust, in that these community members have the least ability to simply pick up and move, unlike the commercial and industrial concern, which sometimes irresponsibly exit the scene without so much as a fare-thee-well.

These concerns sometimes leave behind brownfields – contaminated, polluted ground, doomed to the decay that follows vacancy. (Land contaminated or scarred by mining, and closed landfills, are also considered brownfields). These areas visibly represent environmental degradation, and must surely have hard-to-measure effects on the neighbors' spirits. HB 76 contributes to the complex undertaking that is the healing of these hurts, by encouraging development of community solar energy generation on these otherwise blighted grounds (and on rooftops or parking facility canopies.)

These properties would be exempted from county or municipal corporation property tax if they're built-out with solar that provides at least 50 percent of produced energy specifically to low- or moderate-income customers. This means at costs at least 20 percent less than what's charged by the electric company that serves the area where the community solar is built.

For the measure of environmental justice it provides, the Lower Shore Progressive Caucus supports this bill and recommends a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.