

February 9, 2023

Chair and Members
Maryland House Economic Matters Committee

Regarding: Support for House Bill 68 (Net Metering Flexibility Act) by Delegate Korman

Being a retired climate change scientist very concerned about the pace of climate change, my wife and I took the opportunity to install solar cells on our roof 11 years ago. This was possible because we could take advantage of early incentives and we wanted to be early movers so as to encourage our neighbors to do the same, thus helping create a path that would bring prices down. At the time, because net metering had not yet started, the solar installation contractor, as was apparently industry practice at the time, proposed a system that would supply roughly 80% of our past usage. With solar panel efficiency at the time, this was going to require more than one inverter but not require full use of the second one. Wanting to make the biggest difference possible, we chose instead to pay the incremental cost to increase the number of installed solar cells to fully use both inverters, thereby matching roughly 90% of our past usage.

Over the years since then, by going to LED bulbs and more efficient appliances, we've been able to reduce our usage such that we now generate, on an annual basis, roughly as much as we use, even though we also, for example, switched over from a gas stovetop to an induction stovetop, so increasing the services we were depending on electricity to supply. In those early years, even though the strengthening solar radiation in February and March created positive credits needed to help cover summertime air-conditioning demand, Pepco did not insist, as they do now, on buying out accumulated credits in April at only the price of the electricity. I say "only" because the savings from generating our own electricity also saves on transmission costs, fees, and taxes, which are almost equal in size to the electricity cost alone. I realize that some utility executives say this gives us a free ride, but then we are significantly reducing load on the utility during the summer peak season—indeed even providing them electricity during the times of greatest demand when the cost of their purchases of electricity are far higher than the minimum amount that they are paying to buy out our credits.

But then along came an apparent state requirement that the utility pay off any accumulated solar credits on April 1, setting the balance back to zero, which basically makes much less valuable the solar energy captured during the sunny days of February and March. What this has meant is that the number of solar credits built up going into the summer air conditioning season is no longer able to carry us through to September, when the need for electricity drops below the amount generated by our solar panel system.

The result is that we become purchasers of electricity toward the end of summer. While we do this through a company that provides electricity generated from renewable sources, it is frustrating that it is the arbitrary zeroing out of solar credits in April that is causing this to happen. When Delegate Korman was walking door-to-door and asking about items needing attention, I mentioned this to him and my unsuccessful efforts over the few preceding years to get Montgomery County to see what could be done to get the date changed or abolish the

requirement entirely so that as we continue to electrify, we can fully benefit from our investment in the solar system.

Since my first encounter with Delegate Korman, I very much appreciate that he has been able to find out the particular provision of the law that was requiring Pepco to zero out the accumulated credits and to put forth a bill that can alleviate the problem, reflecting an approach that has been taken in other jurisdictions.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this legislation, which I fully support.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Michael MacCracken".

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