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SB489

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Hon. Brian J. Feldman, Chairman
Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **SB489 – Position: Favorable**

Dear Chairman Feldman:

This letter is written on behalf of Mid-Atlantic Renewable Energy Coalition Action (MAREC Action), a coalition of utility-scale solar, wind, and battery storage developers, wind turbine and solar panel manufacturers, and public interest organizations, **in strong support of Senate Bill 489.**

Senate Bill 489 makes important technical changes to the Public Utilities Article to clarify that local governments have authority to review and issue non-discretionary permits required by a Public Service Commission (PSC) order granting a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN). As you know, the PSC has sole authority to site energy projects over 2 megawatts through the CPCN process.

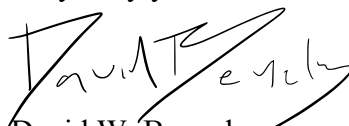
For more than a decade, the PSC has included conditions in CPCN orders granted to renewable energy projects requiring those projects to receive standard non-discretionary permits (such as site plan/stormwater management plan approvals and building/electrical permits) from the local jurisdictions where each project is located. Unfortunately, in recent years certain counties have indicated they do not have authority to review or issue such permits, which has had the effect of halting renewable energy projects already permitted by the PSC. If left unchecked, this trend will undermine the State's ambitious renewable energy and climate change goals.

Once a CPCN is issued, local governments are the correct venue for these non-discretionary reviews because they have the required expertise and perspective to process these permits, as they do for all other development projects within their borders. Accordingly, Senate Bill 489 makes clear that counties and municipal corporations have authority to review all permits required by a CPCN, and that they must process all such permits within a reasonable timeframe. If passed, Senate Bill 489 will codify past practice and allow the important renewable energy projects permitted by the PSC to move forward as intended.

For these reasons, MAREC Action respectfully requests that you give Senate Bill 489 a **Favorable Report**.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,



David W. Beugelmans

cc: Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee