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February 28, 2023

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Senate Education Energy & Environment Committee
2 West Miller State Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Senate Bill 664 - Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Program - Tier 1 Renewable Sources, Solar Energy Systems, and Alterations
FAVORABLE

Dear Chairman Feldman and Members of the Committee,

I am the Corporate VP of Trinity Solar and the Chair of the Maryland Rooftop Solar Coalition. I have 23 years of experience in the rooftop solar industry and was responsible for opening Trinity Solar's Maryland office in 2015.

Our industry is struggling to reach Maryland's solar clean energy goals. We dropped from a high of 20,000 installs in 2015 to a low of around 5,000 last year. The number of installs continues to decrease each year as the economics erode, specifically because the solar renewable energy credits are capped in value and not trading at a price to incentivize rooftop solar adoption.

The primary driver for our difficulties is the solar economics. In my experience, a homeowner needs a 7-year payback to encourage them to go solar. The current incentives put the payback at around 12 years. As a result, it is difficult for us to offer homeowners savings on their electric bill. This bill changes that paradigm by recirculating the funds paid by utilities who have not met their renewable portfolio standards back to solar projects. In doing so, we fulfill the legislative intent of why penalties are paid in the first place and ensure those funds are directed toward meeting the RPS goals established under the Clean Energy Jobs Act of 2019 (CEJA). If these funds are not deployed toward solar projects, we inadvertently undermine the purpose of CEJA and the state will not meet its RPS goals.

Lastly, this bill also ensures that a percentage of the funds are dedicated to the LMI community and also allows the grant to be used for Power Purchase Agreements and Solar Leases, not just loans. Having a broad variety of financing alternatives is critical to ensuring solar is financially accessible to all residential rooftop homeowners and specifically the LMI community.

Thank you, Senator Feldman, for introducing this legislation and we respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 664.

Very truly yours,

Ed Merrick
Corporate Vice President, Trinity Solar

cc: Bryson Popham