



House Bill 1046/Senate Bill 636
Public Safety – Stationary Energy Storage Systems

Position: **SUPPORT w/ Amendments**

Date: March 8, 2023

To: Environment and Transportation

The Caroline County Commissioners **SUPPORT** HB 1046/SB636, Public Safety - Stationary Energy Storage Systems with amendments.

The Board of Commissioners are very concerned for the safety and wellbeing of not only Caroline County residents, but the residents of Maryland as a whole. As the State of Maryland is fast-tracking the use of renewable energy and attempting to mandate certain provisions throughout the State regarding renewable energy, the Commissioners have been made aware of certain serious safety risks associated with energy storage systems.

While it is apparent that energy generation facilities increasingly utilize Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), the Commissioners and staff have been made aware of the possibilities of catastrophic failures from these storage systems, which include explosions, uncontrollable blazes, poisonous chemical plumes, etc. One of the most well-known events took place in 2019 where 4 firefighters were hospitalized due to an explosion caused by a BESS located in Surprise, Arizona.

After research and discussion with our local volunteer fire companies and the State's Fire Marshall's Office we believe the current lack of safety regulations on BESS' puts every Marylander at risk of serious injury. This legislation will require energy generating facilities that choose to utilize Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) to follow the safety requirements set forth in the National Fire Protection Association's 855 Standard and for the Fire Marshall's Office to administer and enforce these regulations to ensure that these structures are as safe as possible.

With this, we respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 1046/SB636 with the amendment to specifically reference the 2023 version of the NFPA 855 Standard.

Sincerely,

J. Travis Breeding
President
Caroline County Commissioners