



## House Bill 1100

### *Battery Storage and Solar Arrays Safety Training Grant Program and Fund*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**  
**WITH AMENDMENTS**

To: Environment and Transportation and  
Economic Matters Committee

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From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 1100 **WITH AMENDMENTS**. The bill would provide resources to counties to both educate the public on the dangers of utility scale batteries installed on solar installations and to better equip and train local firefighters. MACo's suggested amendments seek to expand the requirement to all utility scale batteries.

To fully transition from fossil fuels, it is incumbent that Maryland adopt multiple avenues of renewable power generation and storage. As this transition progresses, counties are seeing various actors start to embrace utility scale batteries as an efficient method to store energy, especially for power sources that are not continual, notably solar energy. Predominantly, the solar industry has taken the lead with adopting these technologies, but so too are commercial, residential, and industrial actors employing various energy sources.

Utility scale batteries come with a slew of issues yet to be fully addressed by policy makers. In at least two instances, county officials were told by battery operators that if there is a fire in the area surrounding a solar installation (and its battery storage), to not respond with conventional first responders, and to instead evacuate the area immediately. Unlike a traditional fire, utility scale battery fires burn hotter and longer, and may discharge a mass of toxic chemicals. *The equipment, resources, and effort required to extinguish one of these fires is scales of magnitude higher than what many county fire departments can reasonably handle.*

While counties acknowledge that utility scale battery technology is an important component in the evolving energy grid, it is also important that we recognize the risks associated with this technology and adopt policy to address those realities. Counties ask that HB 1100 be amended to include training and education on the dangers of all utility scale batteries, not merely those connected to solar installations.

Counties support the intent of HB 1100 but urge the Committee to expand the bill's scope to cover all utility scale batteries, independent of their intended use. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report for HB 1100.