



Committee: Education, Energy and the Environment
Testimony on: SB416- Renewable Energy - Customer-Sited Solar Program
Organization: Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing
Submitting: Laurie McGilvray, Co-Chair
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 8, 2024

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of SB416. The Maryland Legislative Coalition (MLC) Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of nearly 30 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on SB416.

The Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) calls for 14.5% of Maryland’s clean electricity to be contributed by solar energy, but the State is currently falling significantly short of this goal. In fact, because Maryland utilities have failed to meet this solar energy target, they paid a record \$78 in alternative compliance payments to the Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SEIF) in FY 2022.¹ Small-scale solar installations (e.g., roof-top solar systems) account for nearly two-thirds of Maryland’s solar power generation, and we must increase it.² Access to solar systems by low to moderate income (LMI) households is particularly challenging and yet so necessary.

SB416 will address this problem by establishing a Customer-Sited Solar Program (Program) within the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) to provide grants to eligible customers to increase deployment of solar energy systems (with or without energy storage). Funding for the Program will come from compliance fees and allowance proceeds in the SEIF. The bill also allows a third party to apply for a grant on behalf of an eligible customer-generator.

Specifically, the Program will provide grants of varying amounts to: 1) an income-verified eligible LMI customer, 2) a non-income-verified eligible customer located in a LMI community, an overburdened community, or an underserved community, and 3) a non-income-verified eligible customer located outside a LMI community, overburdened community, or underserved community. MEA must publish mapping tools so people can determine whether they are located within a LMI community, overburdened community, or underserved community.

¹ Maryland Energy Administration. [Strategic Energy Investment Fund – Activities for 2022](#). February 2023.

² U.S. Energy Information Administration, [Maryland State Profile and Energy Estimates](#).

SB416 will incentivize the installation of solar systems, particularly in LMI, overburdened, and underserved communities who will benefit the most from lower cost electricity, while also increasing solar energy generation in Maryland.

For these reasons, the MLC Climate Justice Wing strongly supports SB416 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report in Committee.

350MoCo

Adat Shalom Climate Action

Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church Environmental Justice Ministry

Chesapeake Earth Holders

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility

Climate Parents of Prince George's

Climate Reality Project

ClimateXChange – Rebuild Maryland Coalition

Coming Clean Network, Union of Concerned Scientists

DoTheMostGood Montgomery County

Echotopia

Elders Climate Action

Fix Maryland Rail

Glen Echo Heights Mobilization

Greenbelt Climate Action Network

HoCoClimateAction

IndivisibleHoCoMD

Maryland Legislative Coalition

Mobilize Frederick

Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions

Montgomery Countryside Alliance

Mountain Maryland Movement

Nuclear Information & Resource Service

Progressive Maryland

Safe & Healthy Playing Fields

Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee

The Climate Mobilization MoCo Chapter

Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

WISE