

# **SB0416 Written Testimony - Revolution Solar v2.pdf**

Uploaded by: Carl Weidemann

Position: FAV



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To: Education, Energy and the Environment Committee, Maryland General Assembly  
From: Revolution Solar on behalf of MD Low-to-Moderate Income Households  
Re: 2024 Senate Bill 0416 sponsored by Lewis Young, cross-filed with HB0258

As a Maryland solar company experienced in working with Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI) households, we support Senate Bill 0416.

We believe that with the increased grant program and third-party ownership, it is possible to create low/no cost solar programs for LMI Maryland homeowners. Solar installers can utilize these tools to provide homeowners with solar systems capable of producing 100% of their annual electrical usage and greatly relieve overburdened households.

Revolution Solar is the current solar installer for the Baltimore Shines project, funded by FY22 and FY23 MEA Solar Energy Equity Program (formerly known as the Low-Income Solar Grant Program) through Civic Works. We are also a 2022 and 2023 solar installer for the Washington DC Solar For All program. We have completed over 2000 solar installations in Maryland, DC, and Virginia with over 50% of those installations being Low-to-Moderate Income households.

Matthew Young

CEO of Revolution Solar, LLC

**SB0416\_Customer\_Sited\_Solar\_Program\_MLC\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



## TESTIMONY FOR SB0416 Renewable Energy – Customer-Sited Solar Program

**Bill Sponsor:** Senator Lewis-Young

**Committee:** Education, Energy, and the Environment

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Cecilia Plante, co-chair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0416 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of individuals and grassroots groups with members in every district in the state with well over 30,000 members.

Maryland is behind on meeting its solar energy targets and as a result has paid a record \$78 in alternative compliance payments to the Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SEIF) in FY 2022. Maryland needs an estimated 600 megawatts of additional solar power each year to achieve the 2030 target, however just over 200 megawatts each year is currently projected to be built. Access to solar systems by low to moderate income (LMI) households is particularly challenging and yet so necessary.

This bill, if enacted, will establish a Customer-Sited Solar 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).

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.

Our members understand the need to encourage deployment of additional solar sites, particularly in overburdened and underserved communities.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

# **SB 416 MD Trinity Solar FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Chelsea Farrell

Position: FAV



February 7, 2024

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

RE: Senate Bill 416: Renewable Energy – Customer-Sited Solar Program  
FAVORABLE

Dear Chairman Feldman and Members of the Committee,

Trinity Solar (Trinity) appreciates the opportunity to provide written comments on Senate Bill 416 (SB 416). Trinity is a local residential installation company with our Maryland office opening its doors in 2015 and, with over 100,000 solar installations, is one of the largest solar installers in the Northeast. We are dedicated to bringing more reliable, independent and less expensive energy to the community.

Maryland has dropped from a high of 20,000 installs in 2016 to around 5,000 last year. This decline in incentives has placed a significant strain on local companies to provide affordable, solar electric systems to homeowners. For smaller and medium-sized companies, like Trinity, reliance on a steady stream of projects is vital and without it, companies may continue to have to choose to close their doors and shift to other markets. This bill provides an intermediary solution to the issue until a more comprehensive RPS reform.

SB 416 recycles a portion of 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 targets established under the Clean Energy Jobs Act of 2019 (CEJA).

During the Energy Education and Environment Committee Session on 1/18/24, Paul Pinsky, Director of the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA), stated that the predominant adoption of rooftop solar has been among middle and upper-middle classes. However, my experience has been otherwise, and I don't believe this to be true of the industry. Data from the Lawrence Berkeley National Lab indicates that only 14% of the solar market comprises of households with incomes exceeding \$250,000 in Maryland. The current limitation on accessibility to MEA's solar grant, which is restricted to direct purchases or loans, may contribute to MEA's perception of the industry's installation dynamics. Recognizing this issue, our bill seeks to rectify this portion of the situation and is inclusive of third-party ownership. Having a broad variety of financing options is critical to ensuring solar is financially accessible to all homeowners, not just those who purchase systems through loans. With a strong customer-sited program, Trinity is ready to deploy systems immediately to assist homeowners in saving money and Maryland in meeting their climate goals.

Thank you, Senator Lewis Young, for introducing this legislation and we respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 416.

Respectfully,

Chelsea Farrell  
Policy and Legislative Associate, Trinity Solar

**SB 416 MRSC FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Ed Merrick

Position: FAV



February 7, 2024

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

RE: Senate Bill 416: Renewable Energy – Customer-Sited Solar Program  
FAVORABLE

Dear Chairman Feldman and Members of the Committee,

Maryland Rooftop Solar Coalition (MRSC) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 416. MRSC is comprised of a group of companies operating in Maryland whose business models are focused on promoting our State's clean energy policies through the installation and operation of rooftop and customer-sited solar systems. Throughout the last year, we participated in the Solar Incentives Task Force, and today's legislation builds on that group's recommendations.

We submit testimony today and ask for your support for Senate Bill 416 (SB 416), the Renewable Energy Customer-Sited Solar Program, and we wish to highlight the critical need for this legislation to address the decline in Maryland residential solar installations. This drop can be attributed, in large part, to limitations within the current Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS). The existing structure has inadvertently hindered future solar growth, particularly for rooftop systems. Based on MEA's goal of 130,000 new residential solar installations by 2035, Maryland needs to grow the sector by roughly 30 megawatts per year, or 57% annually.

The current under deployment of solar has resulted in substantial sums being paid as substantial Solar Alternative Compliance Payments (SACP) – an indication of the limited progress being made towards the state's 2030 targets.

SB 416 proposes to establish a Customer-Sited Solar program – a bridge program to allow the Maryland rooftop solar industry to regain its strength as the legislature determines next steps on reforming the current RPS. The Customer-Sited Solar Program in this bill expands and improves on the current grant available through the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA). This initiative is designed to immediately increase the deployment of systems, assisting the state in meeting its renewable energy targets and further helping citizens of the state afford a renewable energy source.

**Key Provisions of Senate Bill 416:**

1. **Equitable Distribution:** The bill targets low-and moderate-income, overburdened, and underserved communities (LMIOU), ensuring that the benefits of solar energy reach all demographics. It calls for two tiers of grants – a higher grant level for low and moderate income verified customers statewide and a lower grant level for customers living within LMIOU census tracts.





2. Addressing Geographic Gaps: SB 416 corrects a gap in the current law, allowing the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) to support solar for low- and moderate-income (LMI) households beyond defined LMIOU areas. Tier one, a grant of up to \$7500, expands to all LMI households across the state, opening the program to many that may have been unable to participate.
3. General Market: While we believe that a strong and stable general market is critical to the health of the industry and the ability of companies to effectively serve disadvantaged communities and low-income households, we understand the tight budgetary environment that Maryland is currently facing and acknowledge that these funds may be earmarked for other uses. This highlights why the second tier of funding from SACP payments is all the more important.
4. Inclusive Financing Models: SB416 allows customers to choose between all available financing models, including third-party ownership, ensuring flexibility and providing Maryland residents with the ability to choose how to finance their system.

### **Benefits of Senate Bill 416:**

1. Job Creation: The proposed legislation supports citizens maintaining their current jobs and local job creation. The decline in new residential solar installations is curtailing job opportunities for low- and moderate-income communities. Residential solar creates 10x more jobs than other solar segments due to labor needs. Solar installation jobs are projected to increase 27% from 2021 through 2031, which is well above the 5% average growth rate for all occupations. Maryland currently ranks 36<sup>th</sup> in solar job growth and risks falling further by failing to support greater residential expansion.<sup>1 2</sup>
2. Economic Savings: With the ability to choose a renewable energy source, residential solar customers benefit from financial returns and lower monthly utility bills. Customers in Baltimore save as much as \$75 per month during their first year of solar ownership. Additionally, on average residential solar increases the value of a home by about \$15,000.<sup>3 4</sup>
3. Meeting RPS and Climate Goals: SB 416 aligns with Maryland's goals and contributes significantly to the state's RPS targets. In fact, residential solar accounts for nearly 50% deployed solar in our state. Nationally, expanding local solar and storage could save utility ratepayers nearly half a trillion dollars by 2050.<sup>5 6 7</sup>
4. Leveraging Existing Infrastructure: Customer-sited solar is an efficient and responsible means of meeting Maryland's renewable energy goals and avoids siting constraints. By harnessing the availability of rooftop space, this bill maximizes the use of already built structures, minimizing the need for additional land impacts, preserving Maryland's natural resources. According to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the state needs to utilize up to 33,000 acres to reach its 2030 RPS goals by relying predominantly on large-scale solar projects. Utility-scale solar is presently located on 3,600 acres.<sup>8</sup>



With the right-sized incentives established by SB 416, our industry can be ready immediately to deploy systems, hire local employees, and install MWs to help meet Maryland’s energy goals.

I wish to thank Senator Lewis Young for championing this bill and the Committee for their time. MRSC respectfully asks that a favorable report is issued.

Respectfully submitted,

Ed Merrick,  
Corporate Vice President, Trinity Solar  
President, Maryland Rooftop Solar Coalition

Cc: Rick Abbruzzese

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1 <https://www.seia.org/research-resources/national-solar-jobs-census-2020>

2 <https://www.seia.org/research-resources/solar-market-insight-report-2020-year-review>

3 [https://nccleantech.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Going-Solar-in-America-Ranking-Solars-Value-to-Customers\\_FINAL.pdf](https://nccleantech.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Going-Solar-in-America-Ranking-Solars-Value-to-Customers_FINAL.pdf)

4 <https://www.energy.gov/energysaver/benefits-residential-solar-electricity>

5 <https://www.psc.state.md.us/wp-content/uploads/MD-Costs-and-Benefits-of-Solar-Draft-for-stakeholder-review.pdf>

6 <https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Air/ClimateChange/MCCC/MWG/Solar%20Siting%20Project%20Problems%20in%20MD.pdf>

7 <https://www.eia.gov/state/analysis.php?sid=MD>

8 <https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Air/ClimateChange/MCCC/MWG/Solar%20Siting%20Project%20Problems%20in%20MD.pdf>

# **Erin Kelly Written Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Erin Kelly

Position: FAV



3600 Commerce Drive, Suite 602  
Halethorpe, Maryland 21227

February 8, 2024

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

**RE: Senate Bill 416: Renewable Energy – Customer-Sited Solar Program  
FAVORABLE**

Dear Chairman Feldman & Members of the Committee,

The Renewable Energy Customer-Sited Solar Program is critical to increasing and expanding access to solar-generated electricity for low-to-moderate income families. By passing this bill, you will be credited with taking a crucial step towards fostering renewable energy adoption and advancing Maryland's commitment to sustainable energy practices.

The purpose of this bill aims to rapidly increase the deployment of solar energy systems, aligning with the state's renewable energy targets. Notably, the bill addresses a critical gap in the existing law by expanding support for low-income households beyond defined LMIOU geographic areas. This inclusive approach is essential to ensuring that all Maryland residents, regardless of their location, have equitable access to the benefits of solar energy.

The framework of the program, with its tiered incentive allocation based on customer eligibility, demonstrates a thoughtful and targeted approach. The allocation of funds to verified low-and moderate-income customers within LMIOU census tracts, and households outside LMIOU communities ensures a fair distribution of resources. This not only promotes social equity but also helps to bridge gaps in solar adoption among different demographics.

SB 416's commitment to transparency through the maintenance of a public website by MEA, providing real-time information on funding status and other relevant details. This level of transparency not only fosters trust among stakeholders but also ensures accountability and accessibility, which are crucial elements in the successful implementation of any energy program.

Furthermore, the flexibility to use SACP funds for roof replacements and panel upgrades for income-verified customers is a practical and forward-thinking provision. This not only addresses potential barriers to solar adoption but also contributes to overall home improvement and resilience.

The allocation of SACP funds, particularly the recycling of compliance fees back into LMIOU communities and overburdened or underserved communities, is a strategic move. This will have a positive impact on both the environment and the economic well-being of these communities.

The provision for "solar ready" grants, focusing on roof and electrical upgrades, demonstrates a holistic approach to supporting low-to-moderate income customers.

Lumina Solar urges the committee to support and advance SB 416. This legislation is a significant and forward-looking step towards a more sustainable and equitable energy future for Maryland. Thank you for your attention and commitment to advancing clean energy initiatives in our state.

Sincerely,

Erin Kelly  
Vice President of Operations

# **CCAN\_Renewable Energy - Customer-Sited Solar Progr**

Uploaded by: Ernesto Villasenor

Position: FAV

Testimony in Support of Renewable Energy - Customer-Sited Solar Program  
Senate Bill 416  
Education, Energy, and the Environment  
February 8, 2024

Ernesto Villaseñor, Jr., JD | Policy Manager  
Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund

**On behalf of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund, we strongly support SB 416: Renewable Energy – Customer-Sited Solar Program.** This bill represents a significant step forward in promoting renewable energy adoption, supporting low to moderate-income communities, and addressing environmental concerns in Maryland.

**As we confront the impacts of climate change, it's crucial to recognize how the increasing frequency and duration of energy insecurity disproportionately affect various households.** In August 2023, around 89,000 BGE customers faced power outages due to severe weather conditions across Maryland, highlighting the vulnerability of communities to climate-related disruptions.<sup>1</sup> Five months later, a similar scenario unfolded in January, particularly impacting thousands in the Baltimore area. **This outage, triggered by a severe storm with heavy rain, damaging winds, and flooding, underscored the intersecting vulnerabilities faced by marginalized communities.**<sup>2</sup>

Senate Bill 416 plays a pivotal role in promoting equity in access to solar energy resources. By implementing transparent application and income verification procedures, the bill aims to remove barriers for eligible individuals and communities seeking grants for solar energy systems. **Additionally, the tiered grant structure acknowledges the diverse needs of communities, offering higher grants to low to moderate-income customer-generators and those situated in overburdened or underserved areas.** This intersectional approach ensures that marginalized communities are not left behind in the transition to renewable energy.

Moreover, the provision allowing third-party entities to apply for grants on behalf of eligible customer-generators with their consent enhances accessibility and facilitates broader participation in the program.

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<sup>1</sup> Maryland weather: Thousands without power Tuesday in Baltimore region: 'This storm was real'.  
<https://www.baltimoresun.com/2023/08/09/maryland-weather-thousands-without-power-tuesday-in-baltimore-region-this-storm-was-real/>

<sup>2</sup> Thousands without power in Baltimore area after Tuesday storm, BGE reports.  
<https://www.cbsnews.com/baltimore/news/thousands-without-power-in-baltimore-area-after-tuesday-storm-bge-reports/>



Senate Bill 416 represents a proactive approach to promoting renewable energy adoption, fostering community resilience, and addressing socioeconomic disparities in Maryland. I urge you to support this bill and its goals to establish a more sustainable and equitable energy future for our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**CONTACT**  
Ernesto Villaseñor, Jr., JD | Policy Manager  
Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund  
[ernesto@chesapeakeclimate.org](mailto:ernesto@chesapeakeclimate.org)  
310-465-6943





# **Jack Levenson Testimony Senate Bill 416.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jack Levenson

Position: FAV

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

Jack Levenson Written Testimony  
Director of Business Development Edge Energy  
6854 Distribution Dr, Beltsville, MD 20705

RE: Senate Bill 416: Renewable Energy – Customer-Sited Solar Program  
FAVORABLE

My name is Jack Levenson, Director of Business Development for Edge Energy, and it is an honor to provide favorable testimony on Senate Bill 416, Renewable Energy – Customer-Sited Solar Program.

Edge Energy was established in 2006 and has been supporting low-to-moderate income programs since 2009. Based in Beltsville, we have assisted over 3,000 Maryland residents in reducing their energy burden through Energy Efficiency upgrades and installed and/or serviced almost 6000 residential rooftop solar systems. Our workforce of nearly 50 full time employees (and even more part time) is comprised of skilled professionals including Master, Journeyman, and Apprentice HVAC and Electrical professionals, as well as BPI-certified Energy Auditors and Weatherization Technicians. We are also very proud that 30% of our staff have been with us for over 10 years.

Before I became involved in the local Maryland solar industry in 2009, I was living in Virginia and was a former Middle School teacher and Peace Corps (Ecuador) Volunteer. The entire reason I left Virginia was because of the better climate for solar jobs here in Maryland.

I am here to provide favorable testimony on SB416 because this will help me focus more of my business on LMI households. We are very proud of the work that we have done, but as I'm sure you can imagine, larger projects can translate into overall lower costs because of economies of scale. When families have less money, they often have smaller roofs that also often require more work to upgrade to be solar ready. This bill will help to proportionately make it much more affordable for homes in need to go solar, cutting energy bills very dramatically.

It has always been my mission to serve my community regardless of economic level and these bills will go a long way to helping that as well as growing our local jobs.

Thank you for your time and support of SB416.

# **Jake Assael Written Testimony for.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jake Assael

Position: FAV

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

**Jake Assael Written Testimony**  
**Secretary, Maryland Rooftop Solar Coalition**  
**Senior Manager of Policy, GoodLeap**

**RE: Senate Bill 416: Renewable Energy – Customer-Sited Solar Program**  
**FAVORABLE**

My name is Jake Assael and I serve as the Secretary of the Maryland Rooftop Solar Coalition (MRSC). MRSC is a coalition of industry leaders who finance, sell, design, and install solar photovoltaic systems and are dedicated to the success of rooftop solar in Maryland. I'm also the Senior Manager of Policy at GoodLeap -- a leading financial technology company focused on sustainable home solutions. GoodLeap partners with a network of local installers to offer a broad range of customers financing options that allow them to purchase residential solar and energy efficient products that make their homes more cost-effective and sustainable. We work with over two dozen contractors in Maryland today and have served thousands of Marylanders since 2018.

Last year the Maryland Energy Administration estimated that the state needs 130,000 new residential solar installations by 2035 to meet the state's ambitious and necessary clean energy goals. Unfortunately, Maryland is woefully short of MEA's benchmark and lacks the policies to jump start adoption. According to Lawrence Berkely National Lab data, since 2016, the Maryland residential solar industry has declined by nearly 80%.

To get Maryland on track with MEA goals, the state would need to grow its residential solar market by nearly 60% annually. SB416 would help bridge that gap. By offering grants that meaningfully reduce the costs of solar for low- and moderate-income, overburdened, and underserved communities, the Marylanders who have been most disadvantaged by the legacy energy system can directly benefit from renewable energy. SB416 would also help Maryland reflect national installation data. For example, households making under \$100,000 comprise 44% of the residential solar market nationally, while only 33% in Maryland.

In addition to helping meet the state's clean energy goals and serving LMIOU Marylanders, SB416 would also support job creation in those very same communities. Maryland currently ranks 36th in solar job growth and has seen a 7.6% decline in solar jobs from 2017 to 2022. Residential solar projects create roughly 27 jobs per megawatt installed, more than any other type of solar project. Allowing the residential solar market to decline further could continue Maryland's displacement as a leading solar state.

It is also worth noting that residential solar projects can be deployed quickly on existing infrastructure, without lengthy permitting delays, and start saving customers money from month one. In fact, residential solar customers in Baltimore can save as much as \$75 per month during their first year of solar ownership, according to a DOE study.

Maryland has an opportunity to meet its clean energy ambitions, serve Marylanders who stand to benefit from clean energy the most, and boost in-state jobs. SB416 is not a silver bullet -- there is more we need to do -- but SB416 will help put the state back on the right track.

Thank you for your time and support of SB416.

# **Jai Beasley EDGE Statement.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jari Beasley

Position: FAV

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

Jari Beasley Written Testimony  
Solar Operations Specialist Edge Energy  
6854 Distribution Dr, Beltsville, MD 20705

RE: Senate Bill 416: Renewable Energy – Customer-Sited Solar Program  
FAVORABLE

My name is Jari Beasley. I am from Prince Georges County, Maryland, and graduated Oxon Hill High School in 2006 . I earned my Bachelor's degree from Towson University in 2011. I am proud to be a local Marylander who has been working in the solar industry for over 12 years (majority of my professional career).

I started off working for Astrum Solar in 2012 and then joined EDGE in 2014. Over my almost 10 years at EDGE, I have worked closely with our customers, install teams, counties, permitting agencies, and utilities such as BGE, PEPCO, SMECO, and Potomac Edison to make sure thousands of my fellow Marylander a smooth transition powering their homes from the cleanest source of power we know, the sun! Being at EDGE has changed my life in more ways than just a job. EDGE is just not a company-it is a family who all want the best for our homeowners whether it is in our Solar department or our weatherization department ( which make our company unique to be able to offer both). I have a true love for renewable energy, helping my community, and going green! Of the thousands of homeowners I have worked with, a few stories stand out – I remember one elderly homeowner who had just lost her husband and she also had her 3 grandsons living with her. She was not earning much money and her electric bill was pretty high. She did not have the funds to buy solar straight out. She chose to do Financing - which was very beneficial to her. She was excited to produce SRECS as well as the MD Grant-which played a big role in her going solar. This homeowner still calls me every year around the holidays to check in and also thank EDGE again for her solar after 3 years of going green!

**BaltimoreCounty\_FAV\_SB0416.pdf**

Uploaded by: John Olszewski

Position: FAV



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.  
*County Executive*

JENNIFER AIOSA  
*Director of Government Affairs*

AMANDA KONTZ CARR  
*Legislative Officer*

WILLIAM J. THORNE  
*Legislative Associate*

**BILL NO.:** SB 416

**TITLE:** Renewable Energy – Customer-Sited Solar Program

**SPONSOR:** Senator Lewis Young

**COMMITTEE:** Education, Energy, and the Environment

**POSITION:** **SUPPORT**

**DATE:** February 8, 2024

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 416 – Renewable Energy – Customer-Sited Solar Program. This legislation establishes a customer-sited solar program within the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) for providing grants to eligible customer generators for solar energy-generating systems. The purpose of the program is to increase deployment of customer-sited solar energy systems.

This legislation will provide incentives for those with low-to-moderate incomes to install and utilize solar-collecting systems, which is a goal Baltimore County supports through the County’s participation in the EPA Solar for All grant program. These incentives include technical and educational resources to residential-serving solar projects benefitting low-income and disadvantaged communities and project deployment assistance such as workforce development. SB 416 would contribute to Baltimore County’s many solar goals, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions and air pollutants, aiding private capital in deploying pollution-reducing projects, and enabling working families to overcome barriers to use and benefit from solar technology.

Accordingly, Baltimore County urges a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 416. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at [jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov](mailto:jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov).



# **SB416 - MDLCV Favorable- Customer-Sited Solar Gran**

Uploaded by: Kristen Harbeson

Position: FAV



February 8, 2024

Kim Coble  
Executive Director

2024 Board of  
Directors

Lynn Heller, Chair  
The Hon. Nancy Kopp,  
Treasurer  
Kimberly Armstrong  
Candace Dodson-Reed  
Verna Harrison  
Melanie Hartwig-Davis  
Charles Hernick  
The Hon. Steve Lafferty  
Patrick Miller  
Bonnie L. Norman  
Katherine (Kitty)  
Thomas

**SUPPORT: SB49 - Renewable Energy - Customer Sited Solar Program**

Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee:

Maryland LCV supports SB416 (Renewable Energy - Customer Sited Solar Program) and we thank Senator Lewis Young for her leadership on this issue.

In 2019, the Maryland General Assembly renewed its commitment to expanding renewable energy by establishing a directive to have 50% of its energy consumption coming from renewable sources by the year 2030. Within this goal is the mandate that 14.5% of that renewable energy would come from solar energy generation. This goal has been embraced by Governor Moore, who has expressed his commitment to expand this goal still further, and reach 100% clean energy consumption by the year 2035. In order to achieve these goals, the state must take every opportunity to ease the path for solar energy generation, especially where it can have co-benefits to individuals or communities, such as rooftop solar installations.

Equally important, it is critical to ensure that everyone in Maryland is able to participate in the clean energy economy. Where rooftop solar installations create more energy than is used by the homeowner, the energy is fed back into the grid and the homeowner receives credits for the energy that they have contributed to the system. This can lead to reduced energy costs, and even small financial gains for homeowners who are able to maintain low-energy usage. For low and moderate income households who would benefit the most from this program, the cost of installation as well as the structural improvements to allow for these installations, is insurmountable. SB416, and its House crossfile offered by Delegate Qi, specifically addresses this challenge by offering grants through existing funds managed by the Maryland Energy Administration, to help low-and-moderate income households, and those that live in overburdened and underserved communities install residential solar systems.

SB416 is one of several bills that will be before the General Assembly this year that will advance our renewable energy goals and help us build our clean energy economy. Solar energy is proven to be effective, efficient, and impactful both for the clean energy it creates, as well as for the expanded market for jobs to install and maintain the systems.

Maryland LCV urges a favorable report on this important bill, including with the amendments offered by the sponsor.

**SB 416 - PosiGen - Favorable.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kyle Wallace

Position: FAV



February 8, 2024

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

**RE: SB 416 - Renewable Energy - Customer-Sited Solar Program**

Dear Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and distinguished members of the committee,

**PosiGen strongly supports SB 416** which creates a solar grant program that would increase accessibility for low-income households and communities. PosiGen is a public benefit corporation and certified B corp that provides rooftop solar and energy efficiency services with a focus on serving low-and-moderate income communities. We are able to deliver on making “Solar For All” a reality through our unique solar lease which makes solar affordable and accessible. We underwrite our customers based on expected savings, not FICO score or income, making solar available to every homeowner. We also provide energy efficiency services with every install to maximize energy savings, provide both savings and system performance guarantees, and partner with trusted community partners to reach the hard-to-reach households. PosiGen has been the low-income solar provider for programs such as Connecticut’s Solar For All program, the Philadelphia Energy Authority’s Solarize Philly, New Orleans Solar For All campaigns, and Rhode Island’s recently launched Affordable Solar Access Pathways program.

**Third-party owned solar is critical for serving LMI households**

SB 416 would allow customers with third-party owned (“TPO”) solar systems to participate in the grant program, which is not currently allowed for the Maryland Energy Administration’s Clean Energy Rebate program. TPO has been found by the Lawrence Berkeley National Lab to be one of the primary drivers behind increasing LMI solar adoption.<sup>1</sup> TPO models can be particularly beneficial for LMI households due to the following reasons:

- More accessible financing requirements (i.e. lower FICO scores or income)
- No upfront cost or need to take on debt
- Immediate utility bill savings
- Ability to monetize federal tax credits given potential lack of customer tax liability
- Access to other federal incentives including ITC bonus credits
- System owner, not customer, is responsible for maintenance and repairs

PosiGen’s 25,000 customer base is proof that the TPO model makes solar accessible. In our home state of Louisiana, nearly 40% of solar adopters have household incomes below \$50,000 and 72% have incomes below \$100,000. Through our partnership with the Connecticut Green Bank, 65% of our customers had incomes below the median household income and experienced average savings between \$700-\$1,000 in their first year - with those savings expected to grow each year. To date, we estimate

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<sup>1</sup> See *The Impacts of Policies and Business Models on Income Equity in Rooftop Solar Adoption* by Eric O’Shaughnessy, Galen Barbose, Ryan Wiser, Sydney Forrester, and Naim Darghouth, November 2020 available at: <https://emp.lbl.gov/publications/impact-policies-and-business-models>



that our customers have received \$60 million in net savings through our solar and energy efficiency services.

**The inclusion of tiers for income-qualified and geographic eligibility will increase equity**

We also support the grant “adders” that provide a higher grant amount for income-qualified households and a lower grant amount for projects located in low-and-moderate income, overburdened and underserved communities (“LMIOU”). This approach is emerging as a best practice in equitable solar program design that recognizes that there are real benefits for increasing the deployment of clean energy in LMIOU communities in addition to all LMI households regardless of where they are located.

The purpose of the “Tier 1” grant for income-qualified households is clear - provide assistance to those in most need of support. This adder would allow for higher savings for program participants and would help overcome the challenges and added costs of serving low-income households. This bill corrects a gap in the current law to allow low-income households anywhere in the state to be eligible for the grant.

The “Tier 2” adder for geographically eligible LMIOU households also plays an important role in increasing equity and access. The grant will drive deployment of solar in LMIOU communities which has significant benefits for both the households and community more broadly. Installing solar and completing electrical work or roof work can help increase property values. When a LMIOU household saves money on their electric bills, that is more likely to get spent in the local community and therefore have an economic multiplier effect.

The Tier 2 grant is important because there are real additional costs and challenges with working in many LMIOUs. If these costs and barriers did not exist, then the communities would not be underserved in the first place. A grant would help offset those costs and remove any potential implicit bias against serving LMIOUs. In our experience serving both LMI and non-LMI communities in other states, we see these challenges every day. Systems in LMIOU communities are on average 15% smaller (meaning a higher per unit cost), have financing challenges and are perceived as more risky by lenders, and there are slightly higher payment delinquency rates. Additional work in order to install solar such as electrical upgrades or roof repairs are far more common. Due to these barriers and costs, attrition is also higher.

Examples of federal and state programs that have a geographic eligibility component include the federal Low-Income Communities Bonus Credit where eligibility is based on census tract, Connecticut which provides a modest incentive for households located in “economically distressed municipalities,” Rhode Island’s Affordable Solar Access Pathways program that requires participants live in certain Environmental Justice Focus Areas, and the Environmental Protection Agency’s Solar For All competition which covers projects located in specific census tracts or geographically dispersed low-income households. Maryland would be adopting a proven model to increase affordability and accessibility to households that stand to benefit the most from the savings provided by solar.

For these reasons, PosiGen asks this committee to issue a favorable report for SB 416.

Respectfully,  
Kyle Wallace  
VP, Public Policy & Government Affairs  
PosiGen, PBC

**SB416\_Customer-Sited Solar Program\_EEE\_CJW FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Laurie McGilvray

Position: FAV



**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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.

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

<sup>2</sup> 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



**SB416\_MDSierraClub\_fav 8February2024.pdf**

Uploaded by: Mariah Shriner

Position: FAV



P.O. Box 278  
Riverdale, MD 20738

**Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment**

**Testimony on: SB416 – “Renewable Energy – Customer-Sited Solar Program”**

**Position: Support**

**Hearing Date: February 08, 2024**

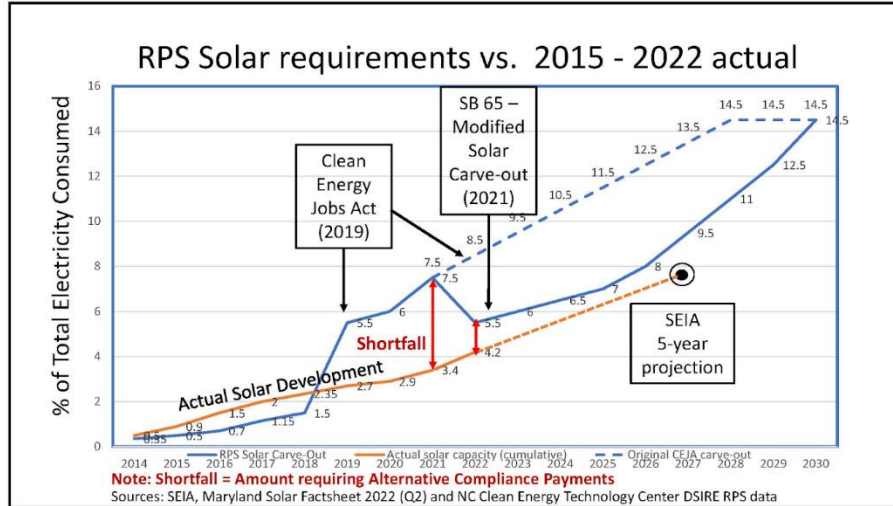
The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club urges this Committee to favorably report SB416.

SB416 aims to increase deployment of customer-sited, rooftop solar energy generating systems by establishing the Customer-Sited Solar Program within the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA). The Program would be supported through increased grant spending from the Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SEIF). The bill builds upon HB550 (passed in 2023) which expanded MEA’s support for low-income households within defined low and moderate income, overburdened and underserved (LMIOU) geographic areas. This legislation would create a program targeting low to moderate income households outside LMIOU geographic areas. As such, this bill will provide important support for Maryland’s efforts to reach its climate goals, as laid out in the Climate Solutions Now Act, and statutory targets for solar generation. Rooftop solar is a necessary component for reaching our climate goals and the Sierra Club Maryland Chapter supports allocating additional funding to expand its deployment.

Through the Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS), Maryland has set a clear statutory target of achieving 14.5% of the state’s electricity consumption from solar generation by 2030. Additional statewide goals, including the greenhouse gas reduction goals laid out in the Climate Solutions Now Act and Governor Moore’s commitment to achieving 100% clean energy by 2035, will require further expansion of solar energy in Maryland.

However, within this broader policy environment, Maryland is falling short of meeting its annual solar goals and is not on a trajectory to meet the 14.5% RPS target by 2030 (see graph below). Sierra Club believes that Maryland must invest in and develop specific policy interventions to support all market segments of solar, including residential, community, and utility-scale solar, as the state works towards its clean energy goals.

## Maryland solar progress



In 2023, Sierra Club collaborated with other solar industry and environmental organizations to explore the barriers and opportunities for solar. The final report, “Learnings and Recommendations from the ‘Solar Deep Dive,’ an exercise exploring barriers, solutions to accelerating solar deployment in Maryland,” discusses the importance of residential, rooftop solar and the need for more dedicated financial support.

Residential solar has the opportunity to play a key role in achieving the 14.5% RPS target and the state’s clean energy goals, while supporting local jobs, increasing grid stability, and empowering individuals. However, it also faces unique barriers to deployment, especially with regards to the economic considerations faced by individual homeowners. We’ve included a few relevant portions of the Solar Deep Dive memo below.<sup>1</sup>

The Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) estimates, as presented in the Solar Task Force meeting on July 18, 2023, that Maryland needs at least 130,000 additional homes with solar by 2035 to meet its current RPS target, which is equivalent to installing around 11,000 systems annually.<sup>2</sup> This MEA estimation equates to approximately 90 MW per year of residential installations; with appropriate policy structures, we believe this segment can contribute substantially to meeting Maryland’s clean energy goals.

The residential solar industry segment is akin to the home improvement industry, and its potential for year-over-year deployment of solar plays a pivotal role in generating local, family-sustaining, and stable local jobs and fostering economic development. Residential solar projects create about 27 jobs per megawatt installed, which is more than any other type of solar project.<sup>3</sup> Put into context, in 2022, 55% of installation and project

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/Solar%20Deep%20Dive%20-%20Memo%20of%20Outcomes%2C%2010.26.2023.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://energy.maryland.gov/SiteAssets/Pages/SolarTaskForce/Solar%20Incentives%20Task%20Force%202023.07.18.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.freeingenergy.com/facts/jobs-solar-installation-residential-utility-g207/>



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management solar jobs came from the residential segment.<sup>4</sup> Expanding this segment will directly expand local jobs.

The rooftop industry holds significant potential to make meaningful contributions towards achieving climate goals. This industry operates using existing infrastructure that doesn't place additional pressure on open lands, a crucial consideration in urban and densely populated areas. Rooftop systems reduce stress on the grid as electrification increases, particularly when they are paired with storage and other energy management technologies.

Additionally, rooftop solar empowers residents to take control of their energy future by allowing them to invest their own capital in sustainable solutions, thus making strides in addressing climate change on a local and individual level.

While the benefits of customer-sited rooftop solar are clear, Maryland homeowners' economic calculations dictate whether they make the decision to install a solar system. Currently there is a payback ("return on investment") period of 11 years or more; in states with a robust residential market, the payback period is closer to 7 years. Developing a robust general market will also allow for companies to become more efficient and profitable, making it possible for them to provide more affordable options to all and increasing opportunities for LMIOU households. Through the creation of the Customer-Sited Solar Program, this bill represents an important step towards adjusting this payback period to create a competitive market.

SB416 would also allow MEA to spend solar alternative compliance payment (S-ACP) funds on roof replacements and panel upgrades for income-verified customers, helping mitigate the higher initial costs associated with customer-sited solar and ensuring that LMIOU communities can access the benefits. In addition to annual household savings, residential solar increases the value of a home by an average of about \$15,000, which can help LMIOU households accumulate wealth.<sup>5 6</sup>

For these reasons, we recommend the Committee favorably report SB416.

Mariah Shriner  
Climate Campaign Representative  
Mariah.Shriner@MDSierra.org

Josh Tulkin  
Chapter Director  
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org

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<sup>4</sup> <https://irecusa.org/census-solar-job-trends/>

<sup>5</sup> [https://nccleantech.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Going-Solar-in-America-Ranking-Solars-Value-to-Customers\\_FINAL.pdf](https://nccleantech.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Going-Solar-in-America-Ranking-Solars-Value-to-Customers_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.energy.gov/energysaver/benefits-residential-solar-electricity>

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.

# **Testimony in support of SB0416.pdf**

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

SB0416\_RichardKaplowitz\_FAV  
2/9//2024

Richard Keith Kaplowitz  
Frederick, MD 21703

**TESTIMONY ON SB#/0416 - FAVORABLE**  
**Renewable Energy - Customer-Sited Solar Program**

**TO:** Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

**My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0416, Renewable Energy - Customer-Sited Solar Program**

Maryland has an ambitious program to reduce the use of fossil fuels to ameliorate the effects of climate change in our state. Solar energy is an important part of the energy portfolio the state is looking to expand to increase our renewable energy availability.

This bill will make it possible for individuals and organizations to acquire grants to finance the installation of solar energy generating systems. It will help cut the red tape and promote regulations on solar power systems.

Everyone benefits from actions we can take in Maryland to improve our climate by reducing our dependence on fossil fuels.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#0416.**

# **CHESSA - MD - EEE Testimony SB416 Favorable 202402**

Uploaded by: Robin Dutta

Position: FAV



8 February 2024

Senator Brian Feldman, Chair  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
2 West  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Oral and Written Testimony**  
**SB416: Renewable Energy – Customer-Sited Solar Program**

**Position: Favorable**

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Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 416, Renewable Energy – Customer-Sited Solar Program. I am Robin Dutta, the Executive Director of the Chesapeake Solar and Storage Association (CHESSA). Our association has over 100 member companies in the solar and energy storage industries. Many members are Maryland-based. Others are regional and national companies with an interest and/or business footprint in the state. Our purpose is to promote the mainstream adoption of local solar, large-scale solar, and battery storage throughout the electric grid in order to realize a stable and affordable grid for all consumers.

I am here to provide favorable testimony on SB416, Renewable Energy – Customer-Sited Solar Program, which would create new residential solar grants that prioritize solar adoption for low-income households in Low and Moderate Income communities, Overburdened communities, and Underserved communities. This bill would lower obstacles to solar development and help Maryland move closer to unlocking the lowest cost path to a clean energy future.

As Marylanders fully electrify their buildings and purchase electric vehicles, they will become more reliant on the electric grid than at any previous point. The grid of the future will have the combined roles that today's grid, natural gas system, and gas stations have. For the grid to serve those roles, it will need to look and act differently. It will need to account for higher statewide electric loads, and greater electric demand in peak periods. And, the higher peak demand gets, the more expensive the electric grid becomes, due to expensive infrastructure expansion and higher peak energy pricing. If clean energy policy lowers peak demand, it lowers the cost of the grid.

States across the country, including Maryland, are just beginning to incorporate assumptions for building and transportation electrification into their projections. [In a 2023 report](#), the U.S. Department of Energy estimates that nationwide peak demand will increase by over 40 percent by 2050. However, there is a lag in Maryland data and modeling. The November 2023 report from the Public Service Commission to the Department of Natural Resources, "[Ten-Year Plan \(2023-2032\) of Electric Companies in Maryland](#)", does not even reference electric vehicles and their anticipated grid





impact. The Maryland energy grid problem is vastly understated as a result. If Maryland's electric future follows anywhere near the projected national trend, it needs to step up the clean energy build-out throughout the state at the same time as handling fossil fuel retirements. That means scaling up statewide solar adoption of all kinds, as soon as possible.

It is essential that Maryland's clean energy scale up comes at the lowest cost with the highest value. Put another way, Maryland needs to lower that runaway peak demand that could come from electric vehicle adoption. Not prioritizing such a path could burden already-burdened families with higher costs for electric grid projects that are unnecessary. That requires implementing a proactive strategy of deploying Distributed Energy Resources (DERs), such as distributed solar and storage, across all geographic areas and communities. When there are more distributed clean energy systems in communities, there is greater potential for not only increased reliability and resiliency assets, but there are also key grid assets that can support local energy demand and help off-set peak demand. Coupled with a build-out of large-scale renewables in and near Maryland, the state can advance its clean energy future while prioritizing a stable and affordable electric grid.

In order for Low and Moderate Income communities, Overburdened communities, and Underserved communities to not be left behind, it is imperative that state policy helps lower barriers for consumers in those communities to adopt distributed solar (paired with energy storage wherever possible). Since all geographic areas need to lower their peak demand and increase their local clean energy, state programs like the one proposed in SB416 should help consumers adopt energy strategies that not only lower energy bills but also can be leveraged (through other types of programs) to lower peak demand and lessen strain on the electric grid. The first step is to deploy DERs in an effective and equitable manner, as SB416 aims to do.

For these reasons, CHESSA strongly supports SB416. It can be a vital policy tool to help those communities deploy distributed solar and storage and contribute to a stable and affordable grid of the future. No community should be left out of the clean energy transition, and every community can be a part of the clean energy solutions.

Please reach out with any questions on solar and storage policy. CHESSA is here to be a resource to the committee.

Sincerely,

Robin K. Dutta  
Executive Director (acting)  
Chesapeake Solar and Storage Association  
[robin@chessa.org](mailto:robin@chessa.org)

# **SB 416 Renewable Energy - Customer-Sited Solar Pro**

Uploaded by: Mariana Rosales

Position: FWA

**Thursday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**TO:** Brian Feldman, Chair of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee, and Committee Members

**FROM:** Mariana Rosales, The Nature Conservancy, Director of Climate; Cait Kerr, The Nature Conservancy, State Policy Manager

**POSITION:** Support with Amendments SB 416 Renewable Energy – Customer–Sited Solar Program

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) supports with amendments SB 416 Renewable Energy – Customer–Sited Solar Program offered by Senator Lewis Young. SB 416 will incentivize increased customer-sited solar deployment by providing grants to eligible customer-generators. This bill is consistent with Maryland’s commitments to support limited-income Marylanders through the renewable energy transition, as it distributes these grants to moderate-to-low-income customers.

The Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022 sets state goals to reduce emissions by 60% by 2031 and reach net-zero by 2045. Governor Moore has set an even more ambitious goal for 100% renewable energy by 2035. These goals are achievable, but only through bold and aggressive action starting today.

Renewable energy sources and a clean energy economy are essential parts of reaching state, national, and global low-carbon energy goals and combatting the negative health and environmental impacts caused by fossil fuels. SB 416 represents a key step in reducing greenhouse gas and co-pollutant emissions.

The state’s Renewable Portfolio Standard supports generating 14% of our energy from solar by 2030. We are lagging in meeting this target. Programs like the one proposed in SB 416 aim to motivate increased and accelerated solar deployment across Maryland.

TNC is aware that the Maryland Energy Administration has worked together with the bill sponsor to propose amendments to SB 416. We agree that these are important considerations, which will strengthen the bill overall.

TNC commends Senator Lewis Young on introducing this bill and working with MEA on amendments, which will incentivize the access to clean, renewable, solar energy and bring increased investment in Maryland’s net-zero future.

**Therefore, we urge a favorable with amendments report on SB 416.**

**SB0416 (HB0258) - LOI w Amendments.pdf**

Uploaded by: Landon Fahrig

Position: INFO



# Maryland

## Energy Administration

**TO:** Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

**FROM:** MEA

**SUBJECT:** SB 416 - Renewable Energy - Customer-Sited Solar Program

**DATE:** February 8, 2024

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### **MEA Position: LETTER OF INFORMATION**

This bill would create the Customer-Sited Solar Program (“Program”) within the Maryland Energy Administration (“MEA”).

Though MEA is supportive of the proliferation of solar photovoltaic energy generating systems –and particularly those that can be sited within the built environment– the bill as written would create immense administrative burdens for MEA, requiring an estimated 25 new employees (13 full-time regular and 12 contractual employees) with an annual increase in expenditures exceeding \$1 million in future years. Because of the limitations on the use of MEA’s Special Fund revenue sources, it is likely that some or all of these expenditures would be General Funds.

MEA is therefore offering several amendments that would help ensure the continued operation of other important and necessary programs within MEA such as school decarbonization and the Solar Energy Equity Grant Program serving low-income Marylanders. These amendments reduce the overall scope of the Program and make several other changes to keep administrative costs down and to ensure operational feasibility. MEA’s suggested amendments include:

- Limiting the funding source for the Program to revenue derived from solar alternative compliance payments (“S-ACP”) only *and* reducing the amount of S-ACP committed to the program from 60% to 20%;
  - to the extent that S-ACP is used to fund the Program in the future, it is likely that that expenditure will have a limiting effect on other MEA programs (i.e. Solar on Schools and Community Solar);
- Permitting a portion of S-ACP to be used for administration to ensure the efficient operation of the Program;
  - currently, no portion of S-ACP can be utilized for the administration of programs, creating challenges in the fast and efficient deployment of those funds;
- Reducing the number of eligible tiers within the Program from three to one (verified low- to moderate- income within a low- to moderate -income, overburdened, or underserved census tract);

- to retain the desires of the legislature in limiting the use of S-ACP funds for these census tracts just last year; and
- Adding a three-year sunset provision.

Our sincere thanks for your consideration of this testimony. For questions or additional information, please contact Landon Fahrig, Legislative Liaison, directly ([landon.fahrig@maryland.gov](mailto:landon.fahrig@maryland.gov), 410.931.1537).