

Testimony in Support of Renewable Energy - Customer-Sited Solar Program
Senate Bill 416
Education, Energy, and the Environment
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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.¹ 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.**²

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.

¹ 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/>

² 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.

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