

Thursday, February 8th, 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.