



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