

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.