



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