



Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment
Testimony on: SB0783-Renewable Energy-Net Energy Metering Aggregation, Solar Renewable Energy Credits, and Taxes on Solar Energy Generating Systems (Brighter Tomorrow Act)
Organization: Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing
Submitting: Laurie McGilvray, Co-Chair
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 29, 2024

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of SB0783. The Maryland Legislative Coalition (MLC) Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of nearly 30 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on SB0783.

The Brighter Tomorrow Act is based on recommendations from a statutorily-created task force charged with studying the types of solar energy incentives that would ensure Maryland can meet its solar energy goals in the renewable energy portfolio standard (RPS), as well as ensure minority business participation, creation of good quality jobs, equitable access to renewable energy, and efficient use of land.

Maryland's RPS calls for 14.5% of clean electricity to come from solar energy. Unfortunately, the State has repeatedly fallen very short of this goal. SB0783 is intended to boost the development of solar energy generation by making some key changes. Specifically, the bill:

- **Raises the aggregated net meter cap** from 2MW to 5MW. It also creates more opportunities for state and local governments and large nonprofit organizations to use their larger meters to access more solar projects and greater flexibility for customer-generators using meter aggregation.
- **Extends the LMI community solar personal property tax exemption through 2030.** Small community solar projects serving at least 50% low- or moderate-income households or overburdened or underserved communities are inherently harder to finance and build, but will now benefit from the existing property tax exemption through 2030.
- **Creates a personal property tax exemption for non-residential rooftop and parking canopy solar installations and a real property tax abatement authorization.** The bill gives local jurisdictions the flexibility to reduce local real property taxes on solar parking canopy projects, and provides additional financial tools to reduce pressure for ground-mounted solar on agricultural land. Additionally, the tax incentives may provide some

building owners in certain communities more flexibility to meet building energy performance targets while providing co-benefits to tenants.

- **Creates a short-term program for SREC multipliers** for certified in-state solar installations up to 2MW. Larger multipliers are available for more costly systems located on rooftops, parking canopies or brownfields. Eligibility for multipliers would last throughout the life cycle of the system, with individual credits lasting five years rather than three years. These multipliers will significantly incentivize community and other smaller solar projects when combined with the increased aggregated net metering cap and tax incentives. This provision is intended as a bridge period during which time more structural reforms to the RPS can be adopted.
- **Creates a uniform rate for payment-in-lieu of real or personal property taxes** for counties and installers of ground-mounted solar systems entering into relevant payment-in-lieu of taxes agreements.
- **Requires prevailing wages and other worker protections** for all solar projects producing at least 1MW.

We strongly recommend a FAVORABLE report in committee for SB0783.

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Adat Shalom Climate Action

Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church Environmental Justice Ministry

Chesapeake Earth Holders

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility

Climate Parents of Prince George's

Climate Reality Project

ClimateXChange – Rebuild Maryland Coalition

Coming Clean Network, Union of Concerned Scientists

DoTheMostGood Montgomery County

Echotopia

Elders Climate Action

Fix Maryland Rail

Glen Echo Heights Mobilization

Greenbelt Climate Action Network

HoCoClimateAction

IndivisibleHoCoMD

Maryland Legislative Coalition

Mobilize Frederick

Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions

Montgomery Countryside Alliance

Mountain Maryland Movement

Nuclear Information & Resource Service

Progressive Maryland

Safe & Healthy Playing Fields

Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee

The Climate Mobilization MoCo Chapter

Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

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