



Maryland Energy Administration

TO: Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: MEA

SUBJECT: HB 1265 - Local Government – Building Permits for Residential Solar Energy and Residential Energy Storage Systems – Required Platform and Inspections

DATE: March 5, 2024

MEA Position: FAVORABLE

This bill would require a county or municipality to implement the web-based platform SolarAPP+ for features supporting the tracking and approval of residential building permits for residential solar energy projects, residential energy storage projects, and main electric panel alterations by August 1, 2025.

Jurisdictions across the US utilize various tools to expedite the permit approval process. An example is SolarAPP+, a tool developed by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) in 2021. This standardized plan review software processes building permit approvals for residential rooftop solar installations. The tool is free for cities and counties and has been shown to integrate with existing government software and cut down the permitting process by at least five to ten business days. In Maryland, Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services is already using SolarAPP+ as part of its eSolar offering to expedite the issuance of solar permits for residential rooftop solar systems.

The use of a single residential online permit processing system throughout all Maryland Local Departments of Permits and Inspections will allow residential solar installers to develop uniform permit submittals rather than have to individualize every permit to the unique requirements of the specific permitting authority. Additionally, MEA has secured federal funding to help local jurisdictions make the shift to SolarAPP+ specifically.

The SolarAPP+ is a collaborative effort to foster rooftop solar adoption by making it easier for local governments to quickly and safely approve standardized rooftop projects for installation via no-cost permitting software. For these reasons, MEA urges the committee to issue a **favorable report**.

Our sincere thanks for your consideration of this testimony. For questions or additional information, please contact Evie Schwartz directly (evie.schwartz@maryland.gov, 443.537.5538).