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Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Capital Budget

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Chair, Public Safety,
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Joint Committee on the Chesapeake and
Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area

Chair, Joint Subcommittee on
Program Open Space/Agricultural
Land Preservation

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 8, 2024

Testimony in Favor of SB049
Restrictions on Use - Solar Collector Systems - Alteration

Chairman Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

I respectfully request a favorable report of Senate Bill 049 to ensure that our State moves toward achieving our renewable energy goals by increasing accessibility of rooftop solar to more Marylanders.

Solar energy has proven to be effective, efficient, and environmentally impactful. Research shows that solar produces no pollution upon installation¹, reduces the stress on power grids and prevents power loss², and provides green jobs within communities³. Further, the long-term cost savings for residents more than pays for the cost of system installation, with research indicating an average of \$1,500 per year in savings per household and up to \$33,000 in savings over the lifetime of the system⁴, with opportunities to leverage even more savings through programs like net metering⁵. The environmental and economic benefits are long-lasting with immediate positive impacts on communities.

Maryland has made a strong commitment to expanding and prioritizing clean energy, with significant goals set for the next decade. The Clean Energy Jobs Act of 2019⁶ set the statewide goal of 50% of Maryland's energy to be derived from renewable energy sources, 14.5% of which is to be specifically solar. Governor Wes Moore expanded on this goal in April of 2023 by committing to Maryland achieving 100% clean energy by 2035⁷. These State efforts are in alignment with Federal initiatives to prioritize and incentivize clean energy nationwide, striving toward 50% of all energy in the United States derived from clean energy sources by 2050.⁸ I am proud to also introduce the

¹ <https://www.nachi.org/advantages-solar-energy.htm>

² <https://www.globalsolarcouncil.org/solar-energy-and-its-countless-benefits-for-the-power-grid/>

³ <https://www.greenbiz.com/article/renewable-energy-transition-creating-green-jobs-boom>

⁴ <https://www.forbes.com/home-improvement/solar/how-much-solar-panels-save/>

⁵ <https://www.forbes.com/home-improvement/solar/net-metering/>

⁶ https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2019RS/Chapters_noln/CH_757_sb0516e.pdf

⁷ <https://www.cbsnews.com/baltimore/news/governor-moore-announces-maryland-commitment-100-clean-energy-by-2035/>

⁸ <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=46676>

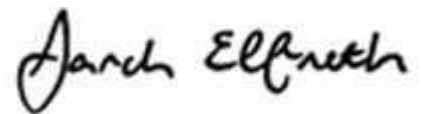
Brighter Tomorrow Act, a bill which will incentivize solar development across Maryland as we strive toward these State and Federal goals.

Ambitious goals such as these require the creation of new opportunities and increased accessibility of clean energy to all Marylanders. Maryland residents, homeowners, business owners, and communities are eager to get involved in the clean energy movement, but far too often, policies and regulations are put in place preventing rooftop solar on homes and residential buildings. This issue was brought to me by a constituent who sought to install solar on the roof of their home but was unable to do so due to unreasonable restrictions from their Homeowners Association. These unnecessary obstacles can inhibit hardworking Marylanders from the environmental and economic benefits of rooftop solar. Senate Bill 049 would establish protections from unreasonable prohibitions and limitations on rooftop solar, opening the door for more Marylanders to have solar powering their homes and communities.

Our great state is emerging as a leader in clean, renewable energy. The passage of Senate Bill 049 would enhance our impact and engage countless Maryland residents in taking action to combat climate change.

I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 049.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Elfreth". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Sarah Elfreth
District 30