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SUPPORT: SB49 - Renewable Energy - Customer Sited Solar Program

Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee:

Maryland LCV supports SB416 (Renewable Energy - Customer Sited Solar Program) and we thank Senator Lewis Young for her leadership on this issue.

In 2019, the Maryland General Assembly renewed its commitment to expanding renewable energy by establishing a directive to have 50% of its energy consumption coming from renewable sources by the year 2030. Within this goal is the mandate that 14.5% of that renewable energy would come from solar energy generation. This goal has been embraced by Governor Moore, who has expressed his commitment to expand this goal still further, and reach 100% clean energy consumption by the year 2035. In order to achieve these goals, the state must take every opportunity to ease the path for solar energy generation, especially where it can have co-benefits to individuals or communities, such as rooftop solar installations.

Equally important, it is critical to ensure that everyone in Maryland is able to participate in the clean energy economy. Where rooftop solar installations create more energy than is used by the homeowner, the energy is fed back into the grid and the homeowner receives credits for the energy that they have contributed to the system. This can lead to reduced energy costs, and even small financial gains for homeowners who are able to maintain low-energy usage. For low and moderate income households who would benefit the most from this program, the cost of installation as well as the structural improvements to allow for these installations, is insurmountable. SB416, and its House crossfile offered by Delegate Qi, specifically addresses this challenge by offering grants through existing funds managed by the Maryland Energy Administration, to help low-and-moderate income households, and those that live in overburdened and underserved communities install residential solar systems.

SB416 is one of several bills that will be before the General Assembly this year that will advance our renewable energy goals and help us build our clean energy economy. Solar energy is proven to be effective, efficient, and impactful both for the clean energy it creates, as well as for the expanded market for jobs to install and maintain the systems.

Maryland LCV urges a favorable report on this important bill, including with the amendments offered by the sponsor.