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Economic Matters Committee

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Public Utilities

Chair, Unemployment Insurance



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 61- PUBLIC SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATION - SOLAR CANOPIES FOR SCHOOL PARKING LOTS - UNDERGROUND INFRASTRUCTURE

TESTIMONY OF DELEGATE LORIG CHARKOUDIAN

JANUARY 28TH, 2025

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Appropriations Operations Committee,

Installing solar panels in parking lots has many advantages.¹ They generate clean energy that can be sent directly into the electrical grid or can be used to charge electric vehicles parked below the canopy. Parking lots occupy land that has already been developed and are located near where the electricity is actually being used; decreasing the need to situate solar arrays on undeveloped land and costly transmission or distribution upgrades. The canopies themselves provide shade from the sun and shelter from rain and snow.

Solar arrays in parking lots are more costly than ground-mounted solar because of the need for additional support infrastructure and underground digging to run necessary conduit and wiring. However, the overall benefits and cost savings of solar power remain.

This bill will:

- Require that while new construction is being done on schools (i.e. while the asphalt on parking lots is already ripped up), conduit and wires are run to prepare the parking lot to eventually have a solar canopy. It's much less expensive to run the wires during the construction, even if the solar canopy structure is not built for some time after.

I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 61.

¹<https://www.wired.com/story/france-solar-panels-parking-lots/#:~:text=The%20biggest%20concern%2C%20though%2C%20is,to%20build%20the%20supporting%20structure.>