

Economic Matters Committee
Maryland General Assembly

March 13, 2025

RE: HB 827 – Public Utilities - Distributed Generation Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity- Favorable

Chair Wilson and members of the House Economic Matters Committee,

ECA Solar provides this written testimony regarding House Bill (HB) HB 827. ECA Solar's position on this legislation is Favorable. ECA Solar develops community-scale solar projects that provide significant benefits to the local economy, community, and environment. Independently owned and operated for over 10 years, we conduct comprehensive due diligence and streamline operations for project development. As a trusted and reliable partner, we partner with landowners to create a solution that protects their land and secures their financial future. Investors trust us to secure land, permits, utility approvals, while keeping a pulse on the changing regulatory environment. With our decades of experience, a strong reputation, and proven industry leadership, we enable clean energy for the communities of tomorrow.

ECA Solar is engaged in the Maryland community solar market as a community solar developer. We are grateful to this Committee for supporting the passage of HB 908 in 2023, which made community solar a permanent solution in Maryland. The permanent Community Solar Energy Generating Systems (CSEGS) Program is helping to generate local economic investment with continued clean energy growth, while simultaneously strengthening the local grid, and directing savings to thousands of customers. The permanent program was a critical step to solidifying Maryland's clean energy future, but the bill before you today is necessary to make sure possible choke points in the approval process are streamlined to prevent unnecessary delays in building project capacity.

Senator Brooks' HB 827 would create a Distributed Generation Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (DGCPCN), that would streamline the permitting process for qualifying community solar projects between 2 and 5 megawatts. The bill directs the Power Plant Research Program (PPRP) to develop standard siting and design requirements through a stakeholder engagement process and for the Public Service Commission to consider that input in establishing the regulations and application requirements for a DGCPCN. Finally, when processing a DGCPCN application, the Commission must ensure public comment opportunities

are available and hold a public hearing. HB 827 would drive greater transparency, efficiency, and consistency in permitting community solar projects in Maryland.

ECA Solar appreciates Chair Clippinger and Delegates Charkoudian and Fraser-Hidalgo for their leadership on HB 827 and their continued support for community solar. ECA Solar also appreciates the Senate and House Leadership for taking up siting in 931 and HB 1036 which establish siting standards for solar and storage systems. HB 827 builds on the direction of the Leadership bill by providing a narrower solution specific to siting and administrative challenges for community solar projects that require (between 2-5 megawatts) a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity. This bill is an important next step to reducing barriers for community solar and achieving the energy and equity benefits of the permanent program.

We urge a favorable report on HB 827.

Sincerely,



Kaitlin Kelly O'Neill
Director of Policy