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February 28, 2025

**SUPPORT: HB1036 - Public Utilities-Generating Stations-Generation and Siting
(Renewable Energy Certainty Act)**

Chair Wilson and Members of the Committee:

Maryland LCV supports SB931: Renewable Energy Certainty Act, and we thank Chair Wilson for his continued leadership in advancing the goals of renewable energy development in Maryland.

In 2019, the Maryland General Assembly passed the Clean Energy Jobs Act, sponsored by Senator Feldman, which set a target of 50% renewable energy by the year 2030, with 14.5% of that energy coming from in-state solar generation. Over the past six years, we have not reached the benchmark goals that would lead to the achievement of that 2030 goal, due in part to disagreements between solar developers and local governments over solar siting considerations. Additionally, while projects over 2MW are overseen by the Public Service Commission, with preemption of local ordinances and zoning through the CPCN process, these approvals were lengthy and costly, due to additional legal challenges along the way.

Over the last two years, Maryland LCV has been actively participating in stakeholder conversations to find a balanced path forward. During the most recent effort, in summer/fall of 2024, a consensus proposal was reached that had buy-in from environmental groups, land preservation and agricultural advocates, county planners, and solar developers. In October, stakeholders engaged in robust outreach for additional feedback from interested parties, with the intent of introducing legislation in the 2025 session. These efforts halted in early November due to the uncertainty surrounding federal incentives and support for renewable energy development created by the results of the presidential election.

Many of the provisions from the compromise language achieved in fall 2024 have been incorporated into the Renewable Energy Certainty Act (SB 931). Maryland LCV strongly supports actions that encourage and facilitate solar energy development both for its potential for jobs and economic investment in the state, and to expedite the transition to in-state renewable energy and away from unpredictable fossil fuels. We also, however, believe that solar energy siting and development must be respectful of local communities and be minimally invasive to the environment. The compromise language in SB 931 creates a balanced approach to addressing environmental impacts, solar industry concerns, and local input. Many of the proposed amendments by partners seek to further advance this balance and restore some of the provisions that had been agreed upon during stakeholder negotiations but are omitted in the proposed legislation. These amendments should be considered. Maryland LCV supports this legislation and urges a favorable report.