



House Bill 739

Public Utilities - Solar Energy Generating Stations - Local Approval

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Economic Matters Committee

Date: March 6, 2025

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 739. This bill prevents the Public Service Commission from approving a Certificate of Public Convenience & Necessity for a solar energy generating system until the project has received approval from the county in which it is located.

The 2025 Maryland General Assembly is grappling with an unprecedented number of complex, generational challenges. One of the most pressing issues is growing community opposition to solar projects. Across rural Maryland, solar energy developments are expanding rapidly—often without consideration for local communities. Many developers bypass collaboration with local officials, site projects on irreplaceable prime farmland, and pressure landowners into seemingly lucrative but ultimately costly agreements.

Since the 2019 *Board of County Commissioners of Washington County v. Perennial Solar, LLC* decision, counties have been largely preempted from imposing additional requirements that could help mitigate these concerns. HB 739 seeks to restore local authority over solar projects, ensuring that developers engage with communities, uphold responsible siting practices, and operate as good neighbors.

This is commonsense legislation which seeks to address conflicts between Maryland's growing demand for energy and the concerns of affected communities. For this reason, MACo urges the Committee to give HB 739 a **FAVORABLE** report.