



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

House Bill 827

Solar Energy – Distributed Generation Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity, Ground-Mounted Solar, and Small Solar Siting Workgroup

Date: March 13, 2025
To: House Economic Matters Committee

Position: **FAVORABLE**
From: Gussie Maguire,
MD Staff Scientist

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** House Bill 827, which would establish a Distributed Generation Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (DGSPCN) for distributed solar generation facilities and accompanying standard siting requirements.

Solar energy production vastly improves upon traditional fossil fuel power sources, but it is not without environmental impacts. Therefore, siting of solar projects must be carefully considered. Forest loss, loss of productive agricultural land, and mismanaged stormwater runoff have accompanied past solar projects.

Establishing standard siting as discussed in HB 827 would help minimize negative consequences in the future. The bill charges the state's Power Plant Research Program with a number of considerations for standard siting and design requirements, including achievement of the State's climate and renewable energy commitments, prohibition on forest clearance except under specific, minimal circumstances, and various facets of on-site stormwater management, such as soil compaction and loss of ground cover beneath panels.

The best possible locations for solar panels are on or above existing impervious surfaces and disturbed, degraded land such as brownfields. However, solar arrays have and will continue to be placed in a much wider variety of locations. Establishing a DGSPCN, with siting requirements that reflect the considerations listed in the bill, will help ensure that renewable energy generation does not come at the cost of forests or water quality.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 827.

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at mstegman@cbf.org.

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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 200,000 members and e-subscribers, including 71,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.