

Committee: Economic Matters
Testimony on: HB827 – Solar Energy – Distributed Generation Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity, Ground-Mounted Solar, and Small Solar Siting Workgroup
Submitting: Deborah A. Cohn
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: March 13, 2025

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Maryland has consistently fallen short of its Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) targets that call for 7% of the state’s renewable energy to come from solar in 2025 and 14.5% by 2030.¹ HB827 seeks to reduce this gap by simplifying and accelerating an application’s review, thereby reducing time, risk, uncertainty and regulatory costs for applicants seeking to construct solar energy generating systems producing more than 2 but not more than 5 MW of alternating current. It also imposes a two year ban on enacting zoning laws or regulations that would impede ground-mounted solar generating systems generating no more than 2MW.

For projects designed to produce more than 2 but not more than 5MW, the bill calls for simplifying and accelerating the process for securing a Distributed Generation Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (DGPCPN) from the Public Service Commission (PSC).

HB827 requires the Department of Natural Resources’ Power Plant Research Program (PPRP) to submit to the PSC proposed siting and design requirements and licensing conditions for new community solar projects seeking state approvals. Once approving these requirements and conditions, the PSC would be required to approve proposals meeting the requirements and conditions within a specific time period. Importantly, HB827 creates opportunity for public comment by affected communities at each step of both the PPRP and PSC reviews.

Temporary Ban on County Zoning Restrictions on Small Ground Mounted Solar Generating Systems. HB827 also imposes a two year ban on enacting zoning laws or regulations that would impede ground-mounted solar systems generating no more than 2MW. State preemption of local zoning laws needs to be carefully considered. The ban in HB827 is not retroactive. It provides reasonable time to balance the need to build more solar energy generating systems in Maryland while respecting local zoning prerogatives not preempted by the State’s Supreme Court [decision upholding](#) Board of County Commissioners of Washington County, Maryland v. Perennial Solar, LLC.

¹ The RPS calls for 38% of the state’s *total* energy to come from renewable sources by 2025 and 52.5% by 2030. [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcaipcgiclfndmkaj/https://dls.maryland.gov/pubs/prod/NatRes/Introduction theRenewableEnergy Portfolio Standard.pdf](chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcaipcgiclfndmkaj/https://dls.maryland.gov/pubs/prod/NatRes/Introduction%20theRenewableEnergyPortfolioStandard.pdf)

Conclusion. Maryland needs to fast-track new clean energy projects. Maryland does not have an energy generation and transmission friendly reputation. This needs to change. But that change needs to favor low-cost zero emissions energy. HB827 carefully balances the importance of meaningful public involvement with the need to accelerate and reduce the cost of attracting more solar projects in Maryland.

For these reasons I urge this Committee to amend the bill, as suggested above, and issue a **FAVORABLE** report on HB827 without weakening amendments.