

Prepared Testimony of Kimmi Doran Lyons

Before the House Committee of Economic Matters

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

February 28th, 2025

Chairman Wilson, Delegate Wilson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kimmi Doran Lyons, and I help run my family farm Highview Farms which is a 500-acre grain and hay operation and beef farm of 170 head. I also serve as the Maryland Farm Bureau District 4 director representing Harford, Baltimore and Cecil counties. Finally, I am the Agricultural Business Development Associate for Harford County.

I strongly urge you to oppose HB1036, as Maryland has lost thousands of acres of farmland each year. This bill has potential to take even more farmland. Overriding the local or county zoning laws to approve solar energy projects would take the power from individual counties to determine whether the land is suitable for solar energy.

Solar on farmland is a huge threat to our food security in the state of Maryland. County governments should be allowed to determine what is best for their county and citizens. For example, my family rents 50% of our farmland, most of which is owned by out-of-state citizens. If a solar company offers those owners more money than what the land is worth, they would be tempted to break our lease and incorporate solar on the property. This would cause us to lose land in current production and must decrease our cattle herd. The meat we raise is sold locally to our community and local restaurants. This would force the demand for food supply to the large retail grocers and decrease the purchases of locally grown products.

I put a lot of faith in my county government and elected officials to put the needs of the county first and foremost. In my career I represent the 614 farms here in Harford County and help them to be economically successful, this would be a major setback for our farmers to have access to affordable farmland.

Farmers deserve to have a voice in legislation to continue feeding and clothing our communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kimmi Doran Lyons