



# THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**BILL:** House Bill 1036: Public Utilities - Generating Stations - Generation and Siting (Renewable Energy Certainty Act)

**SPONSORS:** Delegates C.T. Wilson and Brian M. Crosby

**HEARING DATE:** February 28, 2025 at 1:30 PM

**COMMITTEE:** Economic Matters

**CONTACT:** Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

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**POSITION:** OPPOSE

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The Office of the Acting Prince George's County Executive OPPOSES **House Bill 1036: Public Utilities - Generating Stations - Generation and Siting (Renewable Energy Certainty Act)**. This proposal seeks to incentivize the siting and development of a certain solar energy generating stations or energy devices by altering the standards of consideration against which the public service commission informs its final action on an application for a certificate of public convenience or necessity. Further, the proposal also creates an exemption from personal and real property taxes for solar energy generating stations.

Through a seven-year process of engaging wide-ranging voices from across Prince George's County in a comprehensive zoning rewrite process, County residents stressed their desire for a more transparent local development process, resulting in the 2021 adoption its Countywide Sectional Map Amendment. By potentially taking steps to limit the public's input in this process by bypassing the possibility of local zoning, this proposal forces the county to step back from this important local responsibility, harming the public's trust in the overall development process. To sideline these voices as proposed in HB 1036 would run counter to the commitments made to our residents and current development partners.

Prince George's County stands in lock step with Maryland's clean energy goals as documented in its [Climate Action Plan \(CAP\)](#) priorities CO-4: Commit to clean and renewable energy; M-1: Power County operations with 100% renewables; M-2: Increase deployment of solar PV; and M-3: Accelerate deployment of resilient energy systems.

However, HB 1036/SB 931 conflicts with several CAP priorities including MIS-11: Maintain a climate-resilient equitable forest and tree canopy cover; AIS-5: Steer development to high growth areas, minimize impacts to natural resource areas, and reduce flood risks; and AIS-10: Promote a climate resilient food system.

Like the Countywide Sectional Map Amendment and the CAP, all Prince George's County initiatives are developed in partnership between community stakeholders and professional staff. Prince George's County has the lowest average income in the DC metro area and has both urban and rural census tracts with environmental justice and equity challenges. County residents have long been disproportionately impacted by high exposure to pollution, proximity to industrial facilities, and poor health outcomes. County leaders recognize the value of residents' lived experiences and rely on the collective knowledge of our community to serve as the foundation for all decisions, investments and priorities. HB 1036 undermines not only this commitment, but also its land use, equity and fiscal priorities, by effectively allowing energy project development on scarce agricultural and woodland conservation areas.

Prince George's County's designated economic development and affordable housing priority areas, essential to the County's livability, sustainability and economic future, will be at risk due to competition with energy development. In addition, agricultural areas, central to the County's history, culture and local food production, and among the last large, undeveloped tracts in the County, will be prime targets for energy development projects. Without adequate incentives necessary to improve project feasibility and benefit at a business level, local jurisdictions will need to retain the creative flexibility afforded through the local zoning and development process.

Each of Maryland's counties face their own individual challenges that may not easily translate across jurisdictional borders. This bill disregards local land use, the local community input process, comprehensive planning, and economic factors that would otherwise allow counties to partner with the State to achieve renewable energy portfolio goals. The overburdened and vulnerable residents of Prince George's County should not bear the brunt of fixing Maryland's energy crisis. Impacted communities should continue to benefit from fair representation at the table through a just development process, in collaboration with State regulators.

For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **OPPOSES HB 1036** and asks for an **UNFAVORABLE** report.