

February 19, 2025

Maryland General Assembly  
Economic Matters Committee  
230 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Re: Testimony in Support of House Bill 1111: An Act Concerning Public Utilities – Solar Energy Generating Systems – Floating Systems and Systems Located on Brownfields**

Dear Delegate Wilson and Vice Chair Crosby,

Third Pillar Solar is pleased to provide the following written testimony in support of HB 1111 introduced by Delegate Fraser-Hidalgo. Third Pillar Solar is a floating solar project developer, owner, and operator deploying community solar and other distributed generation projects in Maryland as well as several other states. We appreciate Delegate Fraser-Hidalgo's time and effort to support Floating Photovoltaic (FPV) projects in Maryland. **Third Pillar Solar urges a favorable report on HB 1111.**

Floating solar projects consist of conventional solar photovoltaic panels mounted on robust high-density polyethylene (HDPE) plastic and metallic floating docks that are mechanically stabilized on water. More than five hundred projects have been installed worldwide with a cumulative capacity of over 4 GW.

Third Pillar Solar, like other developers in the field, focus on floating solar projects built and operated on man-made industrial, commercial, and municipal waterbodies. These projects are a true "dual use" application of solar, eliminating the need to encumber land from agricultural or other productive uses. We estimate that there **are over a gigawatt of potential floating solar sites in Maryland** that would not impact the primary use or any recreation on those bodies of water.

As you are aware, last session the Brighter Tomorrow Act passed both chambers of the Maryland legislature and was signed into law by Governor Moore. The program provides incentives for solar development on locations that are often out of sight and out of mind. The program specifically identifies rooftops, parking canopies, or brownfields as preferred sites. Unfortunately, floating solar projects were not considered at the time of the Act's passage even though FPV projects further the objectives of the Act. HB 1111 cures this by listing "a floating system" alongside rooftops, parking canopies, or brownfields.

Third Pillar is actively developing early-stage floating solar projects with total potential capacity greater than 50 MW in Maryland on wastewater treatment ponds and former quarries. Given the higher capital expenses and additional complexity in developing floating solar, the projects would

have a **higher likelihood of success if they were eligible for the 1.5x SREC adder** provided by the Brighter Tomorrow Act.

We believe that it is important to recognize that certain man-made waterbodies are preferred siting locations that have inherent cost disadvantages similar to rooftops, parking canopies, and brownfield sites. As such, it is important to level the playing field for floating solar. House Bill 1111 does just that by making FPV projects eligible for the 1.5x SREC adder.

The addition of floating solar projects in the Brighter Tomorrow program would unlock countless waterbodies that have no other use other than industrial use for their large surface area. Developers are now recognizing these waterbodies hold inherent value to generate renewable energy and help Maryland reach its climate goals.

For these reasons, **Third Pillar Solar respectfully requests the committee grant House Bill 1111 a favorable report.** Third Pillar Solar looks forward to working with the committee and encourages members to reach out with any questions on FPV project specifics.

Sincerely,

Andrew Strauss  
Senior Manager of Policy and Regulatory Affairs  
Third Pillar Solar  
Astrauss@thirdpillarsolar.com