



HoCoClimateAction.org
Howard County, Maryland



SB0983 – Solar Energy - Distributed Generation Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity, Ground-Mounted Solar, and Small Solar Siting Workgroup

Hearing Date: March 6, 2025

Bill Sponsor: Senator Brooks

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Submitting: Liz Feighner for Howard County Climate Action, Indivisible Howard County

Position: Favorable

HoCo Climate Action is a [350.org](https://www.350.org) local chapter and a grassroots organization representing approximately 1,400 subscribers. We are also a member of the [Climate Justice Wing](#) of the [Maryland Legislative Coalition](#). Indivisible Howard County represents 800+ members and is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members).

We urge you to vote favorably on the **Solar DGPCN streamline bill, SB0983**, which aims to strengthen Community Solar in the state, by creating a streamlined permitting process for these relatively smaller projects. The bill will optimize the permitting process for Community Solar projects, create predictable design standards for approval, speed up deployment of critical generation assets in the state, and ensure continued access to clean, renewable energy especially for low-to-moderate income Maryland residents.

HoCo Climate Action along with many faith communities have been promoting Community Solar to members who wish to enjoy the benefits of participating in having their homes powered by renewable energy without the need and expense of installing solar directly at their homes. We have been frustrated that many times we encourage members to sign up, there is a waiting list because no community solar projects are available because of the long and arduous process of bringing community solar projects online.

SB983 creates a new Distributed Generation Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (DGPCN) permitting structure, targeted specifically at Community Solar projects between 2-5MW. The current CPCN permitting process was designed for larger power generation and other public projects, which can be arduous and time-consuming for smaller developers.

The proposed legislation would task the Power Plant Research Program (PPRP) with creating standard siting and design requirements, and standard licensing conditions in order to receive a DGPCN. It would be extremely beneficial in streamlining the process without compromising any standard licensing conditions. Instead of "fasttracking" expensive ill-conceived proposals like new gas-fired power plants and untested small modular nuclear reactors which would inevitably take longer to come online and jeopardize the state meeting its climate requirements, let's "fasttrack" reliable, cost effective community solar to solve our adequacy issues now. People get on waiting lists to get community solar for their homes. No one wants gas-fired power plants and we don't need them.

For all of these reasons, we strongly support **SB0983** and **urge a FAVORABLE report** in Committee.

[HoCo Climate Action](#)

[Indivisible Howard County](#)