

March 6, 2025

Senator Brian Feldman  
Chair  
Senate Education, Energy, Environment Committee  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Senator Cheryl Kagan  
Vice Chair  
Education, Energy, Environment Committee  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: SEIA Support for SB983: Solar Energy - Distributed Generation Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity, Ground-Mounted Solar, and Small Solar Siting Workgroup**

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) in **support** of SB983 (Brooks). It was referred to the Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee on February 3, 2025.

Founded in 1974, SEIA is the national trade association for the solar and storage industries, building a comprehensive vision for the advancement of these technologies. SEIA is leading the transformation to a clean energy economy by supporting policy measures that will drive the needed investment in clean, domestic, local job-producing solar generation. We work with our 1,200+ member companies, which include solar and storage manufacturers, service providers, residential, community and utility-scale solar developers, installers, construction firms, and investment firms, as well as other strategic partners, to shape fair market rules that promote competition and the growth of reliable, low-cost energy storage and solar power.

In 2023 the Maryland General Assembly passed HB908, which established a permanent community solar program in the state of Maryland. Community solar provides homeowners, renters, and businesses equal access to the economic and environmental benefits of solar energy generation regardless of the physical attributes or ownership of their home or business. Community solar expands access to solar for all, in particular low-to-moderate income utility customers. Maryland's community solar program requires every project to dedicate at least 40% of its capacity for low and moderate income customers, and ensures all participating residential customers will have lower electricity costs.

Community solar projects above 2 megawatts fall within the permitting jurisdiction of the state via the Maryland Public Service Commission and its Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity ("CPCN") process. Maryland's CPCN process is well equipped to handle complex utility-scale and transmission-based permitting reviews where each project is significantly different from the next. However, it is not well-aligned for most community solar projects, which are typically similar in size and design. Further, a CPCN can entail an adjudicated process that requires a disproportionate amount of time and cost for project developers relative to what's need for community solar project scale and impact. This misalignment between the permitting process and unique needs of community solar projects threatens to slow down and



undermine renewable energy deployment. It will create an outsized burden not just for solar developers, but also the state agencies involved in CPCN reviews. This issue is compounded by the fact that the number of CPCN applications will grow exponentially in the coming years due to community solar.

SB983 creates a distributed generation ("DG") CPCN process for qualifying community solar projects that will result in an optimal design and siting process for these projects. Developers will be incented to leverage the DG-CPCN in lieu of the standard CPCN process. To qualify, projects will need to meet the siting and design standards established by the state and informed by stakeholder input and industry best practices. SB983 will right-size the cost, time, and resource investments by community solar developers to be commensurate with project scale and impact. Public agencies will likewise benefit from an efficient yet robust process that facilitates clean energy deployment in the state. SB983 will enable faster deployment of community solar, contributing to the state's solar energy requirements and providing customers, especially those who are low-moderate income, with access to clean energy and electricity savings, thus also supporting the state's equity goals.

For these reasons, SEIA strongly supports this legislation and respectfully urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB983. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

*Leah Meredith*

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