



HB1532 - OPPOSE

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**HB1532 -
Utility RELIEF (Reducing Energy Load Inflation for Everyday Families) Act**

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
March 23rd, 2026

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of my organization, Solar United Neighbors Action (SUN Action), I urge a unfavorable report on HB1532, the Utility RELIEF (Reducing Energy Load Inflation for Everyday Families) Act. Despite the bill's promising attempts to provide immediate relief to residential customers' utility bills, it comes at the expense of programs and legislative proposals that offer lasting energy affordability while keeping the state on a path towards a reliable, equitable, and clean energy future.

SUN Action is a 501(c)4 non-profit organization that represents the needs and interests of solar owners and supporters in Maryland and across the country. Together with our 501(c)3 affiliate Solar United Neighbors (SUN), we help people go solar, join together, and fight for their energy rights. SUN is dedicated to creating a clean, equitable, resilient energy system that benefits everyone. SUN has helped more than 1,925 Marylanders add 17 MW of solar to their homes and businesses and represents forty five thousand solar owners and supporters across the state. These comments are on behalf of SUN Action.

Our major concerns with HB 1532 is that it does nothing to meaningfully stabilize the solar industry in the short and long term. The bill also compromises the deployment of local distributed energy resources (DERs) and community solar in a manner that will harm income eligible and energy burdened households first and worst. The immediate energy savings that this bill is offering ratepayers will quickly be eclipsed by surging energy costs if it is allowed to still defund DER programs, reform the net metering tariff in a way that limits rooftop and community solar, and arbitrarily restrict the size of new plug-in solar systems to just 391 watts.

While we're extremely heartened to see plug-in solar enabling language in HB1532—as it helps more households harness the power of the sun and get immediate relief on their energy bills—as currently drafted, the language caps total system output at 391 watts, functioning as an absolute size restriction rather than an exemption threshold. This approach would effectively prohibit larger systems and would fail to accommodate future updates to National Electric Codes and Underwriter's Laboratory codes, meaning



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relegislation would be required to keep these systems safe and accessible. Maryland is also the only state to limit systems to such small sizes. This would drastically reduce the savings potential for participating customers. We urge the measure to be updated to emulate the standard in states like Utah and, most recently, Virginia¹, where systems are capped at 1,200 watts per customer and ≤ 391 watts output are exempt from product installation requirements that require changes to the building's wiring or premises.

Proposed changes to net metering could slow development of new distributed solar projects at a time when Maryland needs these projects to meet growing demand in an affordable way. Distributed solar including rooftop and community solar are the fastest and lowest cost new source of energy generation.

Residential energy costs will also continue to rise if we fail to include major provisions from HB0345, the Affordable Solar Act, in HB1532. It is becoming increasingly clear that the House's sudden refusal to vote on HB0345 after it passed the Energy subcommittee is because the Senate suggested that it will not move this critical bill. This is in spite of the fact that the bill has robust support from labor unions, energy and environmental stakeholders, and the clean energy industry. It ensures that the cheapest, in-state electrons available are added to the grid and positions Maryland to lead on clean and equitable energy policy at a time when federal incentives and policies are being rolled back.

We urge the members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee and the rest of the Senate to recognize that short term fixes and band-aid solutions will not solve our energy supply and affordability crises. We need holistic solutions, like the Affordable Solar Act, that meet the scale of the problem and attract new electricity generation investment at the lowest possible cost to ratepayers and the system as a whole.

For these reasons, we urge an unfavorable report on HB1532 and ask that the suggested amendments and additions are adopted.

Thank you for your consideration.

¹ SB250 Electric utilities; small portable solar generation devices, local regulation.; Legislative Information System, (March, 2026). <https://lis.virginia.gov/bill-details/20261/SB250>.