

TESTIMONY FOR SB0341

Public Utilities - Solar Energy Generating Systems and Solar Renewable Energy Credits (Affordable Solar Act)

Bill Sponsor: Senator Brooks

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Person submitting: Lydia Goble LaGue

Position: **FAVORABLE**

I am a member of AARP, Indivisible Frederick Coalition and Third Act Maryland, among other groups. I am writing on behalf of Third Act Maryland's Democracy Working Group. **Third Act MD** is group of older Maryland adults working collectively to promote climate justice and democracy efforts. We are also part of the **Maryland Legislative Coalition**, all unpaid citizen lobbyists, with well over 300 members.

So many Maryland citizens are seeing crazy increases to their utility bills, despite no change in usage to account for the higher bills. Apparently, the Public Service Commission (PSC) has done little if anything to invest in solar and other clean energy sources. We cannot continue this way. It is now time for Maryland to act!

This bill would:

- phase out the current solar subsidy program
- replace it with a new program requiring the PSC to conduct competitive procurements for utility scale solar and ensure that the new systems are built with the best value for rate-payers.
- require the PSC to establish incentive prices for rooftop and community solar.

All of this will be achieved without costing additional increases for rate payers because the Alternative Compliance Payments that have already been paid by rate payers will be put into an escrow account used to implement this new solar model.

In addition, this bill would incentivize portable, small scale solar systems that plug directly into a standard outlet and require no rooftop installation, thus offsetting consumption and expense on a per/home basis. And – Bonus - when paired with a battery, this offers households an emergency back up during outages.

Passing this bill will help many Marylanders of all economic levels, especially renters like myself, countless other seniors, and young families who cannot invest in traditional rooftop solar, in addition to homeowners with shaded or otherwise unsuitable roofs.

Enacting the bill will make it possible to greatly increase the amount of clean energy going into the grid and into people's homes.

I strongly support this bill and recommend a FAVORABLE report in committee.