



SB341– SUPPORT

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**TESTIMONY SUPPORTING SB341:
Public Utilities - Solar Energy Generating Systems and Solar Renewable
Energy Credits (Affordable Solar Act)**

Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

February 17th, 2026

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee;

I write today on behalf of Ceres to respectfully urge a favorable report from the Committee on SB341, the Affordable Solar Act. Ceres is a nonprofit organization that works with investors, companies, and financial leaders to promote sustainability solutions. Through our Business for Innovative Climate and Energy Policy Network (BICEP), we mobilize over 80 major employers, including several companies doing business in MD, to advocate for more affordable and sustainable climate and clean energy policies.

Executive Summary

This legislation represents a critical opportunity to strengthen MD's clean energy economy, attract millions in private investment, create thousands of good-paying jobs, and provide substantial long-term savings for MD businesses and ratepayers.

From a business perspective, SB341 delivers three compelling outcomes:

- Market certainty through a predictable procurement schedule that enables project financing and development
- Economic development through 4,000 MW of new solar deployment, creating jobs and additional tax revenue
- Ratepayer protection through competitive procurement, cost caps, and built-in benefits from avoided capacity costs

Market Certainty Drives Investment and Lower Costs

The renewable energy industry has demonstrated that market certainty reduces financing costs and project prices. SB341's structured procurement schedule provides the visibility that developers, manufacturers, and financiers need to commit capital efficiently.

For the distributed solar market, the administratively determined incentive (ADI) program creates a stable, transparent pathway for residential, commercial, and community solar projects. Fixed pricing for 15 years allows businesses to:

- Secure favorable debt financing with predictable revenue streams
- Reduce equity requirements through lower risk premiums
- Scale operations and workforce with confidence
- Pass savings to customers through lower installed costs

Job Creation and Economic Development

The deployment of 4,000 MW of new solar capacity potentially represents millions of dollars in private capital investment in MD over the next decade. This investment will generate:

- Direct construction jobs: Thousands of skilled positions in electrical work, installation, project management, and engineering. The bill's prevailing wage and apprenticeship requirements ensure quality jobs with family-sustaining wages while developing MD's clean energy workforce.
- Operations and maintenance employment: Long-term positions for the 15-25 year life of these facilities, providing stable careers in communities across MD.
- Supply chain and service industries: Expanded opportunities for MD companies in manufacturing, logistics, engineering, legal services, finance, and insurance.
- Tax revenue: Significant new property tax revenue for local governments hosting solar projects, providing funding for schools, infrastructure, and public services without burdening residents.

Energy Price Stability and Hedge Against Volatility

Solar energy provides MD businesses and consumers with a powerful hedge against fossil fuel price volatility. Unlike natural gas generation, where fuel costs can spike dramatically due to supply disruptions, geopolitical events, or market manipulation, solar has zero fuel costs. The fixed-price SREC-II contracts lock in energy costs for 15 years, providing certainty for business planning and protecting ratepayers from future price shocks.

This price stability is particularly valuable given:

- Increasing volatility in natural gas markets

- Growing global competition for liquified natural gas (LNG)
- Potential carbon pricing or emissions regulations that could increase fossil fuel costs

Supporting MD Business Competitiveness

MD businesses increasingly view clean energy access as essential to their competitiveness. Major corporations are setting aggressive carbon reduction targets and seeking to source renewable energy for their operations. SB 341 helps MD businesses:

- Meet sustainability commitments: Access to in-state solar generation enables MD companies to achieve their climate goals while supporting the local economy.
- Attract and retain talent: Workers, particularly younger employees, increasingly prefer companies with strong environmental credentials.
- Reduce energy costs: Community solar and distributed generation options allow businesses of all sizes to access solar energy without capital investment.
- Enhance competitiveness: Companies can market their MD operations as powered by clean energy, meeting customer and investor expectations.

Regional Competitiveness

MD risks falling behind neighboring states in clean energy deployment. Virginia has established aggressive solar targets and attracted billions in private investment. New Jersey and Delaware also have substantial solar procurement programs. Without SB341, MD loses economic development opportunities to competing states.

Conclusion

SB341 represents sound economic policy that delivers measurable benefits to MD businesses, workers, and ratepayers. The legislation's combination of market certainty, competitive procurement, cost controls, and workforce development creates the foundation for sustainable solar industry growth.

From a business perspective, the Affordable Solar Act provides:

- Predictable markets that reduce financing costs and project prices
- Substantial job creation and economic development
- Protection for ratepayers through hard cost caps and competitive procurement
- Long-term price stability and hedge against fossil fuel volatility
- Support for MD business competitiveness and sustainability goals



Ceres urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB341. This legislation represents a critical investment in MD's economic future, creating quality jobs, attracting private capital, and delivering affordable clean energy to MD families and businesses.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Mauk
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