

SB0341 - SUPPORT

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SB0341

Solar Energy Generating Systems and Solar Renewable Energy Credits

(Affordable Solar Act)

Education, Energy, and the Environment

February 10th, 2025

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

As a parent and resident of Rockville, Maryland who is concerned about my children's future and the future of everyone in this state, I urge a favorable report on SB0341, Solar Energy Generating Systems and Solar Renewable Energy Credits (Affordable Solar Act).

Marylanders deserve clean, affordable energy, no matter where they live or what their income is. As a coastal state that is already dealing with the impacts of climate change and rising energy bills, it is especially important to support the transition to a clean energy future in every way possible. HB0345 helps set a foundation for that transition and future.

Currently, Maryland families face some of the highest electricity costs in the nation. With the grid needing upgrades and potential pressure from data centers in the region, these costs will keep going up. In contrast, I have seen my electricity bills stay steady because of my use of renewable energy. Between solar panels on my house and buying from a community solar group, I have been able to fulfill nearly all of my electricity bills with solar, including charging our electric car. As a result, my household has not felt this impact nearly as badly as most people. Everyone should have access to these real solutions, not just people who are financially privileged. Our system should protect Maryland residents from both high utility prices and the effects of climate change. This bill creates an escrow account system that ensures transparency and prevents utilities from passing excessive costs to customers. It guarantees that ratepayer money for solar actually goes to support solar rather than getting shifted to irrelevant projects. This approach provides a way to fulfill our urgent need for clean energy while also protecting our families and businesses.

This legislation also makes solar energy accessible to everyone, whether they are renters or owners. A typical balcony system can reduce apartment electricity bills by 10-30%. This bill reduces barriers that have kept solar access out of reach for so many people. I remember when we installed solar panels on our house and the excitement in my son's eyes when I told him we were going to make our own electricity. Everyone should have the chance to experience the power that comes from knowing that you can take electricity generation into your own hands and contribute to a clean energy future.

Lastly, this bill offers a real step forward in addressing the crisis being created by climate change and meeting Maryland's renewable energy goals. Our state deserves to be independent of reliance on coal, natural gas, and oil. Moving this bill forward would make real progress on that goal.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable report on SB0341.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

Shannon Shea