

12 March 2026

Senator Brian Feldman, Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Written Testimony

SB843: Net Energy Metering, SUNRISE Program, and Community Solar Energy Generating Systems Program (SUNRISE Act)

Position: Favorable

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide favorable testimony on SB 843, Net Energy Metering, SUNRISE Program, and Community Solar Energy Generating Systems Program (SUNRISE Act).

My name is Zac Meyer, and I am a Director of Development at Soltage. Soltage originates, develops, finances, owns, and operates solar energy facilities across the nation in 16 states and growing. We have been active in Maryland since 2021 with 3 operational facilities, 2 under construction, and a strong development pipeline of over 100 megawatts of solar in Maryland.

I am here to provide favorable testimony on SB843, Net Energy Metering, SUNRISE Program, and Community Solar Energy Generating Systems Program (SUNRISE Act).

By doubling down on its commitment to local power, Maryland would recognize that distributed generation is essential to the State's future. As regional electricity demand increases, Maryland has few tools in its toolbox to mitigate rapidly rising costs. These assets are uniquely valuable due to their small footprint and rapid ability to deploy. In aggregate, they help to mitigate capacity price increases and keep money in the pockets of Maryland ratepayers.

The SUNRISE Act recognizes that distributed solar helps to reduce homeowners' and businesses' bills while also bringing down grid costs. It sets up a transparent and predictable path to modernize the state's net metering program. And, it establishes a new relationship between community solar projects and the Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP) in order to create a direct path of savings to low-and-moderate income households.

Maryland residents are facing extraordinary utility bill prices because of three main reasons:

1. We are primarily dependent on a natural gas heavy market
2. The infrastructure is old, and needs significant upkeep and capital investment

- The PJM market is seeing historic prices due to projected capacity challenges as the region faces rising electricity demand, which is due to historic projected load growth

Clean, distributed generation helps to mitigate all of these costs, period. These projects are primarily financed using private capital, and their role as grid assets bring unique benefits to the distribution grid that lowers consumer energy costs by lowering utility costs. It is in Maryland’s best interests to double down on distributed generation because that local generation is created when Marylanders demand the most electricity (during the day). That is when capacity needs are greatest, and when demand peaks.

Service Territory	Capacity Deployed (MW)	Annual Impact	Estimated Capacity Value (current capped price)	NET RATEPAYER SAVINGS
BGE	524.2	\$8,918,119	\$73,388,000	\$64,469,881
Pepco	315.7	\$4,526,955	\$44,198,000	\$39,671,045
DPL	119.1	\$2,673,104	\$16,674,000	\$14,000,896
PE	127.1	\$1,314,842	\$17,794,000	\$16,479,158

Above is a snapshot of distributed solar currently operating in Maryland in each investor-owned utility territory. The net ratepayer savings is a component of the bill impacts net metering has for each utility, and the capacity value of that solar based on the last PJM auction. **Without this operating solar, Maryland utilities would have needed to procure an additional \$152 million in capacity in addition to the record capacity auction results that are causing electric bills to increase.**

It is essential to maximize how much distributed generation comes online. Hundreds of megawatts of capacity are currently under development within the current net metering program. Changes to existing rules could pull the rug out from this in-development capacity. It is important that any changes to the net metering program, and the creation of a successor program, protects such investments in the state. This legislation ensures that by creating clear steps and criteria that project developers can meet through actions that are largely under their control.

In addition, the community solar program at OHEP would unlock direct solar benefits for low-income households. The energy affordability crisis has disproportionately hurt those families who are eligible for energy assistance, Medicaid, food stamps and other public support programs. There are not enough dollars available to help everyone, however this program would allow community solar to augment the resources OHEP already has in place. This also enhances the ability of distributed solar to serve low-income households and communities.

Maryland can utilize distributed solar as a central tool to lowering consumer and utility energy costs with SB843. We look forward to working with this Committee to ensure Maryland remains a national leader in local, reliable, and equitable power.

Soltage asks the committee for a favorable report on SB843.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zac Meyer', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Zac Meyer
Director of Development
Soltage