



NATIONAL AQUARIUM®

Date: February 19, 2026

Bill: SB 341 – Affordable Solar Act

Position: Support

Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee:

The National Aquarium respectfully requests a favorable report on **SB 341**. This legislation would build on the Brighter Tomorrow Act of 2023 by modernizing solar access and incentives for Marylanders, lower costs for ratepayers, and take steps to insulate Maryland’s renewable energy development from federal interference.

One of the National Aquarium’s three strategic conservation goals is to combat climate change. We do this through a holistic, solutions-focused approach, which includes communicating ocean and climate science, building resilience through community empowerment, implementing nature-based solutions, and reducing our own carbon footprint with a commitment to achieve net-zero Scopes 1 and 2 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2035. Reaching this target requires the state to increase its renewable energy production, including through responsible development of solar and offshore wind. The National Aquarium’s two-panel solar tree on Pier 4 educates the public to this effect, describing the important role solar and other forms of renewable energy play in lowering the financial and environmental cost of energy production.

This legislation contains several provisions to ensure that solar energy remains a crucial part of Maryland’s energy future, especially important as federal efforts to discourage solar and other renewable energy development persist. SB 341 would reform Maryland’s Solar Renewable Energy Credit (SREC) program and replace it with a proven model expected to support 4,000 new megawatts of grid electricity by 2035.

The Aquarium particularly appreciates that SB 341 promotes expanded access to solar energy by authorizing the purchase and installation of portable solar energy generating systems for residential use. Rooftop solar is also a critical piece of Maryland’s solar energy portfolio, but it has presented obstacles to Marylanders that rent, belong to lower-income households, or are homeowners with shaded roofs. Portable or balcony solar units are a proven solution that expands access to solar energy and its benefits, including lower costs, reduced pollution, and improved energy resilience when paired with a battery system. These individual units are compact, do not require rooftop access, and can plug directly into a standard outlet. States such as Utah have seen tremendous demand when rolling out their own portable and balcony solar programs. These units are an efficient, affordable, and accessible way for Marylanders to literally plug into renewable energy and experience immediate relief from rising energy costs.

Maryland’s energy systems are at an inflection point. Governments at every level must focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions rapidly while prioritizing a just transition away from fossil fuels. Now more than ever, the state of Maryland can and should build on its climate leadership by incentivizing additional solar energy across our state. **We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 341.**

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