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BILL NO.: HB 1532
TITLE: Utility RELIEF (Reducing Energy Load Inflation for Everyday Families) Act
SPONSOR: Speaker of the House
COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment
POSITION: **Support with Amendments**
DATE: March 25, 2026

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS with Amendments** House Bill 1532 – Utility Relief (Reducing Energy Load Inflation for Everyday Families) Act. A portion of this bill mandates that local jurisdictions adopt a particular software, Solar App, for the revision and approval of rooftop solar permit applications and direct the Power Plan Research Program to produce a study on streamlining energy zoning and permitting. Baltimore County’s primary concerns are related to existing fire safety and historic preservation standards.

The legislation mandates local governments, by 2028, to adopt permitting software for automatic approvals of rooftop solar applications, if county inspection timelines exceed 5 days over a 12-month period. It also mandates that a County implement a remote inspection option. Remote inspections do not provide sufficient review of field conditions for code compliance, including fire safety. By mandating remote inspections, the state is creating a serious hazard, putting lives of both residents and firefighters at risk.

With respect to historic preservation, the legislation specifically excludes historic preservation under criteria to be reviewed by the mandated solar permitting software. Baltimore County is most concerned about visibility of these solar panels on historic buildings. The County’s Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC) is not opposed to the solar initiatives but raise concerns about the location on historic building and properties. Allowing the County to determine the impact and location of solar on our local landmarks is essential, each property is unique and distinct.

Baltimore County is more than willing to be a leading stakeholder to help address Maryland’s current energy crisis and support the amendments presented by MACo.

Accordingly, Baltimore County urges a **FAVORABLE with Amendments** report on House Bill 1532 from the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee. For more information, please contact Kayenda Twesigye, State Legislative Officer of Government Affairs at ktwesigye@baltimorecountymd.gov.