

March 3, 2026

Senator Brian Feldman, Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 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, Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB843, the SUNRISE Act. Independently owned and operated for over 11 years, ECA Solar develops community solar projects that provide significant benefits to the local economy, community, and environment. ECA Solar submits this testimony as Favorable for SB843.

The SUNRISE Act Provides an Orderly Transition to a Successor Net Metering Program

Maryland's commitment to distributed energy resources like community solar has provided many direct benefits. Landowners receive steady leasing income for decades, municipalities receive tax benefits, all ratepayers benefit from the improvements to the local distribution network that developers fund, and of course community solar customers are receiving direct savings on their utility bills. Maryland's increase to the net metering cap to 3GW combined with making the community solar pilot program a permanent program has created business certainty for projects to be financed and built. That certainty has been a bedrock for ensuring successful project development in a time of turbulent federal changes.

In considering a transition to a successor program, economic certainty for developers is key. The market has weathered the turbulence of the changes brought by the One Big Beautiful Bill, and maintaining consistency in state programs is critical to ensuring a resilient market. The SUNRISE Act provides an orderly transition to a successor net metering program, while also ensuring the valuation of the successor program is a robust cost benefit analysis of distributed generation.

The SUNRISE Act Increases Low and Moderate Income Customer Participation

The Community Solar Energy Generating Systems program includes a requirement that projects must serve eligible low and moderate income customers with 40% of the project's output. The SUNRISE Act contains language to help support this programmatic goal by enabling customers that are already receiving energy assistance through state programs to be enrolled in community solar projects. Utilizing programs that already provide energy assistance will help streamline the process for customers- allowing them to receive all of the energy assistance they are entitled to

without duplicative proofs of eligibility. The changes will help ease the energy burden for those who need it most urgently, while continuing to support the goal of extending the benefits of solar to all ratepayers.

ECA Solar supports the passage of SB843 and urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on this bill.

Thank you for your consideration and time.

Sincerely,

Kaitlin Kelly O'Neill
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