

SB0341

Solar Energy Generating Systems and Solar Renewable Energy Credits

(Affordable Solar Act)

Education Energy and Transportation

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

My name is Christine Pendzich. I live in Maryland legislative district 20. I am a co-leader for Third Act Maryland; Third Act is a national climate organization for seniors. I am writing on behalf of Third Act Maryland in support of SB 0341.

Third Act has been proud to have Maryland be in the forefront on climate actions, such as joining RGGI and passing the Climate Now Solutions Act in 2022. Third Act has supported action on climate alongside other climate groups and our state legislators. In 2025 the MD Dept of the Environment presented a plan that covered 25 agencies and outlined more than 100 priority actions to lower emissions; the implementation of these would go a long way to meeting the goals set in 2022.

However the execution of many of these initiatives partially relies on federal grants, which have been dramatically reduced under the Trump presidency. The big bad ugly law has eliminated federal tax credits for rooftop solar for residential customers and others. The US Environmental Protection Agency has declared that greenhouse gases are not a threat to our health and the environment, and the Defense Department is required to purchase electricity from coal fired generators. These changes in federal policy make it imperative that Maryland establish a state system to encourage investment in solar facilities and that is exactly what the **Affordable Solar Act** will do.

First, the Affordable Solar Act provides a path for individuals and households living in apartments to invest in solar through the balcony solar initiative. Under this section of the Act, apartment dwellers will be able to hang solar panels from their balconies without interference from utilities as long as they meet Underwriters Laboratory

standards. (These panels can also be stationed in yards, driveways and other locations with sun and access to a plug.)

Second, the Affordable Solar Act requires that 2,000 MW of industrial scale solar be constructed in Maryland. Industrial scale solar is the fastest and cheapest way to generate electricity, much cheaper than natural gas or nuclear facilities.¹ Industrial scale solar can be in place before 2030 while natural gas and nuclear facilities cannot begin to generate electricity until many years into the future. There is no longer any real question that industrial scale solar facilities combined with batteries are just as reliable as natural gas facilities.² Because industrial scale solar with batteries is reliable, investment in these facilities will increase the supply of reliable capacity and therefore reduce the price of capacity in the PJM capacity market.

Third, the Affordable Solar Act requires that an additional 2,000 MW of distributed solar be constructed in Maryland. Most of this investment will be “behind the meter” solar on residential homes and commercial buildings. Behind the meter solar reduces Maryland’s dependence on the PJM grid and protects Maryland consumers from the impacts of large data centers on electricity rates. Furthermore, because PJM allocates capacity and transmission costs on the basis of relative peak demand, behind the meter solar, by reducing Maryland’s peak demand, will reduce the amount of revenue flowing from Maryland consumers to PJM vested interests. PJM’s voting membership and its board are dominated by utilities; we can’t rely on PJM to solve the problem of rising electric costs in Maryland.

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

Thank you for your consideration.

¹ [lazards-lcoeplus-june-2025.pdf](#)

² PJM. “December 2023 Effective Load Carrying Capability (ELCC) Report. Available at: [elcc-report-december-2023.ashx](#).