

## Board of County Commissioners

Joseph A. Vigliotti, President  
Michael R. Guerin, Vice President  
Thomas S. Gordon III  
Kenneth A. Kiler  
Susan W. Krebs



## Carroll County Government

225 North Center Street  
Westminster, Maryland 21157  
410-386-2043; 1-888-302-8978  
fax 410-386-2485  
MD Relay 711/800-735-2258

March 23, 2026

The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

RE: House Bill 1532 – Utility RELIEF Act - Support With Amendments

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

The Carroll County Board of Commissioners appreciates the intent of House Bill 1532 to improve energy affordability and streamline solar deployment. We share the state's goal of expanding renewable energy in a responsible and efficient manner.

However, based on input from the county's Public Works, Planning, and Permitting professionals, we respectfully support this legislation only with amendments to ensure it remains workable at the local level and does not create unintended risks for our communities. As the entities responsible for implementing and enforcing these requirements on the ground, local governments must retain the authority and flexibility to carry them out effectively and safely.

Carroll County's inspection teams serve a geographically large and largely rural jurisdiction with limited staff resources. While inspectors work to complete inspections as efficiently as possible, on-site checks remain critical to ensuring compliance with electrical and fire safety standards, particularly for rooftop systems integrated into existing structures. Provisions requiring automatic approvals or remote inspections based solely on timelines risk overlooking important safety considerations for both residents and first responders.

Carroll County is already meeting expedited timelines for permit review and inspections, often completing inspections within 24 hours. As such, the bill's mandated software and process changes would not improve performance locally and instead risk replacing systems that are already working effectively. Additionally, our staff reports that approximately 50% of solar permit applications require corrections during plan review to address code compliance and safety issues - issues that would likely be missed under an automated approval system.

The bill also raises questions regarding enforcement if deficiencies are identified after an automatically approved permit has been issued, creating uncertainty for both jurisdictions and homeowners.

Carroll County also has numerous historic districts and properties subject to preservation easements and local protections, including areas such as Westminster, Uniontown, and Taneytown. The bill's exclusion of historic preservation review would limit our ability to ensure solar installations are compatible with these protected resources and could result in irreversible impacts.

Like many jurisdictions, Carroll County continues to manage increasing permitting volume and regulatory responsibilities without proportional increases in staffing. Additional reporting mandates and rigid procedural requirements would add administrative burden without improving outcomes and could ultimately slow permitting timelines rather than accelerate them.

We support MACo's proposed amendments that would establish realistic expedited review timelines, preserve local discretion over inspections and safety standards, ensure historic preservation considerations remain part of the process, and encourage coordination with local governments.

Absent the adoption of these amendments, Carroll County would have significant concerns with the bill as drafted and would be compelled to oppose the legislation.

For these reasons, the Carroll County Board of Commissioners respectfully requests a favorable report with amendments on House Bill 1532.

Sincerely,  
Carroll County Board of Commissioners

Sincerely,

THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CARROLL COUNTY



Joseph A. Vigliotti  
President



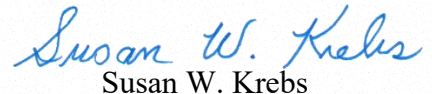
Michael R. Guerin  
Vice President



Thomas S. Gordon III



Kenneth A. Kiler



Susan W. Krebs