

February 17, 2026

BILL:

TITLE:

POSITION:

COMMITTEE:

SPONSORS:

HEARING DATE: February 19, 2026

SB0341 (Cross-filed with HB0345)

Public Utilities - Solar Energy Generating Systems and Solar Renewable Energy Credits (Affordable Solar Act)

FAVORABLE

Education, Energy, and Environment

Senators Brooks, Kramer, and Lam

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

I am happy to live in District 13 in Howard County, Maryland, and I am writing today in strong support of SB0341, the Affordable Solar Act.

This Act will enable powerful actions to mitigate the increasing climate challenges our State faces, while also addressing the rising financial impact energy bills have on Maryland residents. Our current dependency on fossil fuels not only contributes to further climate problems but also impacts our health, economy, and national security. As my last BGE bill confirmed for my family, energy takes a growing bite out of the budgets of all Marylanders and disproportionately impacts those with moderate and lower incomes.

Increasing the production of electricity from renewable sources is crucial to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from burning fossil fuels and moves us to a more stable cost of energy by being less driven by the market oscillations of transported fuels. Once installed, the 'fuel' of solar photovoltaic generators is delivered free daily. Maryland has fallen short of its goals to add solar as a meaningful source of grid-scale electricity. With the loss of valuable Inflation Reduction Act tax incentives, many businesses and households find it far less appealing – or even possible - to install solar power. The Affordable Solar Act will provide stable support to meaningfully shift Maryland toward more solar energy, both at utility scale and at household levels. Setting a target to connect 4,000 MW of solar capacity to the Maryland grid by 2035 is key to minimizing the growing climate change impacts we see increasingly across our State.

The Act improves the Solar Renewable Energy Credit (SREC) program with a system modeled after New Jersey's competitive procurement framework and introduces new programs for both smaller and larger solar projects to generate "Solar Renewable Energy Credits II" (SREC-IIs). Importantly, it directs certain alternative compliance fees, the penalties paid by electricity suppliers who do not meet their renewable energy requirements, into a new escrow account that will ensure these funds are used to procure more solar energy generation. Additionally, the bill mandates that electric companies procure a specific number of SRECs and SREC-IIs through solicitations managed by the Public Service Commission, aiming to significantly increase solar energy generation capacity in the state. The bill also allocates 75% of public service company franchise tax revenues originating from large electricity users to this new escrow account, further supporting solar energy initiatives. In another timely improvement, SB0341 modifies the States's Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS), increasing the required percentage of renewable energy, particularly from solar sources. Utility-scale solar is one of the quickest-to-deploy new generation sources, with the lowest levelized cost of energy, as cited by Lazard in a June 2025 study. <https://www.lazard.com/news-announcements/lazard-releases-2025-levelized-cost-of-energyplus-report-pr/>

Closer to home, I praise and value that the bill legalizes the purchase and use of a "portable solar energy generating system," which is a movable solar device designed to safely plug into a standard electrical outlet and supply up to 1,200 watts of power to a home or apartment. Not all Marylanders own their roof or can afford a large PV system. Like popular "balcony solar" in Europe, this "plug-in solar" will enable Maryland residents – including those with low incomes and renters – to safely lower their utility bills with sunshine.

Maryland residents want effective and fair climate policies and recognize we need a range of tools to tackle this broad, long-term problem. The policies in the Affordable Solar Act help move Maryland in a good direction. I appreciate your time in reading my testimony and encourage a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB0341.

Respectfully,

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Howard County District 13 Resident and voter

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cc: Senator Guy Guzzone