

# THE BOARD OF GARRETT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

203 South Fourth Street - Courthouse - Room 207 Oakland, Maryland 21550

www.garrettcounty.org countycommissioners@garrettcounty.org

301-334-8970

301-895-3188

FAX 301-334-5000

## Board of Commissioners

Paul C. Edwards  
Ryan S. Savage  
S. Larry Tichnell

## County Administrator

Kevin G. Null

## County Attorney

Gorman E. Getty III

March 23, 2026

Delegate Marc Korman, Chair  
Environmental and Transportation Committee  
250 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

### **RE: House Bill 1532 – Utility Relief (Reducing Energy Load Inflation for Everyday Families) Act** **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENT**

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

The Board of County Commissioners of Garrett County **SUPPORTS HB 1532 WITH AMENDMENTS** as proposed by MACo. Among other things, this Bill mandates that counties adopt certain software for the review and approval of rooftop solar permit applications and directs the Power Plant Research Program to produce a study on streamlining energy zoning and permitting.

HB 1532 goes a long way in addressing energy affordability but, as a small county, we have concerns with provisions dealing with review and approval of rooftop solar permitting. For a small county these provisions place an unnecessary burden on our permitting process and are attempting to fix a problem that doesn't exist for us.

The Board of County Commissioners supports the following amendments to HB 1532 related to mandated software, safety and preservations concerns:

*Strike page 14, line 18, through page 18, line 22, inclusive, and insert:*

*(A) By August 1, 2027, Each Local Government Shall Establish An Expedited Permit Review Process For:*

- (1) Residential Solar Energy Systems;*
- (2) Residential Energy Storage Systems;*
- (3) Main Electrical Panel Upgrades; And*
- (4) Main Electrical Panel Derates.*

*(B) The Expedited Review Process Required Under Subsection (A) Of This Section Shall Be Designed To:*

- (1) Provide Permit Application Reviews And Determinations Within an Average of 7 Days After Submission of Complete Application; And*
- (2) Provide Inspections of a Completed Project Within an Average of 7 Days After Submission of a Complete Application For Inspection.*

(C) A County Or Municipality May Not Be Required To Comply With The Requirements Of Subsections (A) And (B) Of This Section If The County Or Municipality Does Not Require A Permit For:

- (1) Residential Solar Energy Systems; Or
- (2) Residential Solar Energy Systems Paired With A Residential Solar Energy Storage System

And, to provide some clarity about solar siting we support the following amendments:  
Insert into appropriate segment of the bill, this new language:

Article - Public Utilities  
7-218.

(g) An owner of a solar energy generating station:

(2) shall post a surety bond with the Commission for not more than 125% of the estimated future cost of decommissioning the solar energy generating station and its related infrastructure, [~~less any salvage value~~]; and

(h) (4) (i) The total combined number of solar energy generating stations **HAVE BEEN AND** that may be approved for construction in a priority preservation area that was established before January 1, [~~2025~~] 2026, shall:

1. be limited in area to 5% of the total acreage of the priority preservation area;
2. be located in the project area within the priority preservation area; and
3. meet all requirements under this section.”.

The Board supports the following amendment related to local input and zoning considerations”

On page 93, in line 29 after “timelines;” insert “(3) coordinate with appropriate local governments in the development of the sites and processes through this Act, to ensure appropriate community input and coordination; and”; and in line 30 strike “(3) and substitute “(4)”.

Thank you for your consideration.

On behalf of the Board,



Kevin G. Null  
County Administrator