

**Testimony on: SB265 - Community Solar Energy Generating Systems - Prohibited Locations - Adjacent Parcels**

**Committee: Education, Energy and the Environment**

**Organization: Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing**

**Submitting: Deborah A. Cohn**

**Position: Favorable**

**Hearing Date: February 19, 2026**

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan and Committee Members:

SB265 would repeal the prohibition on developing community solar projects on adjacent parcels of land. I am a longtime Montgomery County resident concerned about a landowner's freedom (constrained by restrictions protecting public welfare to determine equity in participation by Maryland residents in the generation of solar energy and the state's longstanding failure to meet the solar energy targets of the Renewable Portfolio Standards. For these reasons I urge you to issue a favorable report on SB265.

Energy affordability remains a critical concern for Maryland residents as utility bills continue to rise at a greater rate than inflation. Under state law community solar projects must offer subscribers a discount from their utility's standard offer service rate. At least 40% of the capacity of new projects is reserved for low and moderate subscribers who are guaranteed a minimum 10 percent discount on their electricity bills, which is larger than for other subscribers. Community solar also allows residents who do not own the building in which they live (renters and condo owners) and residents on whose property a photovoltaic system would not be economically viable to still lower their utility bills and participate in increasing the generation of new solar energy generating systems within Maryland.

Maryland needs significant new electricity generation to address load growth and reliability. Yet it repeatedly fails to meet its solar energy requirements under the Renewable Portfolio Standards, and has fallen significantly behind on its climate goals under the Climate Solutions Now Act.

SB265 addresses these issues by repealing an existing restriction to now allow the development of community solar projects on adjacent land parcels. New community solar projects will develop only if the landowner wants to participate in the program. Thus, landowners remain in control of the use of their land, but by eliminating this restriction on projects on contiguous parcels, the government reduces an unnecessary restriction on a landowner's ability to determine the highest and best use of his or her land. This modest change will enable new clean energy generation projects to proceed where a landowner wants to participate, and where nearby interconnection points are favorable. The change will also enable more economically viable solar energy generation in Maryland, and improve energy affordability for willing residents.

For these reasons, I urge a **FAVORABLE** report on SB265.