



Maryland

Energy Administration

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

FROM: MEA

SUBJECT: SB 265 - Community Solar Energy Generating Systems - Prohibited Locations - Adjacent Parcels

DATE: February 19, 2026

MEA Position: FAVORABLE

The Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) respectfully submits this letter in support of Senate Bill 265.

SB 265 repeals the prohibition preventing community solar energy generating systems from being located on adjacent parcels when the combined installed capacity would exceed 5 megawatts. The bill maintains the 5-megawatt cap per individual project, but removes barriers that have unnecessarily constrained thoughtful, site-appropriate development across contiguous properties.

Maryland's Community Solar Program has become a cornerstone of the State's clean energy strategy. By allowing subscribers to receive bill credits through virtual net energy metering, community solar expands access to clean energy for renters, homeowners without suitable rooftops, small businesses, and households in multifamily housing. Community solar also represents one of the easiest ways for ratepayers to immediately reduce their utility bills; savings of 5-25% are typical. SB 265 facilitates additional deployment that can expand subscription opportunities for LMI households, particularly in service territories where subscriber demand continues to outpace available capacity.

The bill preserves the integrity of the 5-megawatt project cap while addressing an adjacent-parcel restriction that can unintentionally limit efficient use of appropriately zoned or previously disturbed land. Parcel boundaries often reflect historic subdivision patterns rather than practical site conditions. By removing this constraint, SB 265 allows developers and landowners to utilize contiguous parcels more effectively without altering core program safeguards or increasing the size limit of any individual system.

Existing law already prioritizes responsible siting, including rooftops, industrially zoned areas, brownfields, parking canopies, transportation corridors, and agrivoltaic projects. The law also provides enhanced flexibility for co-located systems that serve at least 75 percent LMI subscribers or incorporate agrivoltaics. SB 265 works within this framework and complements Maryland's growing emphasis on dual-use agricultural solar and land-efficient development strategies.

Clear and workable siting rules reduce development uncertainty, improve financing predictability, and support timely project deployment. In turn, these improvements expand supply and strengthen competitive subscription offerings for Maryland households and businesses.

Community solar plays a vital role in Maryland's energy portfolio. It contributes to greenhouse gas reductions, supports local job creation, enhances grid resilience through distributed generation, and provides meaningful energy savings to residents who cannot install rooftop solar. SB 265 represents a targeted statutory refinement that maintains environmental protections, capacity limits, and LMI participation requirements while improving program functionality.

For these reasons, MEA urges the committee to issue a **favorable report**.

Our sincere thanks for your consideration of this testimony. For questions or additional information, please contact Megan Outten, Policy manager, at megan.outten@maryland.gov or 443.842.1780.