MDFB - Support - SB706 Renewable Energy Portfolio

Uploaded by: Tyler Hough

Position: FAV

Maryland Farm Bureau

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February 26, 2026

To: Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

RE: **Support of SB706 Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard – Alterations**

On behalf of the over 7,000 member families of the Maryland Farm Bureau, I submit written testimony in favor of SB706 Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard – Alterations. This proposed legislation responsibly adjusts Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) by reducing Tier 1 renewable percentage requirements beginning in 2027. As written, SB 706 decreases the Tier 1 mandate from previously scheduled levels, such as lowering the 2027 requirement from 41.5% to 26% and adjusting future-year targets accordingly. These changes reflect a realistic assessment of Maryland's energy landscape and help protect consumers, including Maryland's farming community.

The Maryland Farm Bureau (MDFB) has long held that energy policy must balance environmental goals with affordability, reliability, and preservation of agricultural viability. MDFB policy explicitly states that it opposes any percentage increase to the RPS if it causes an increase to electric rates for consumers. By reducing rather than expanding the RPS mandate, SB 706 aligns directly with this principle and helps ensure that Maryland's farmers are not burdened by escalating utility costs they cannot pass along in competitive markets.

In addition, MDFB policy urges policymakers to ensure renewable energy development does not come at the expense of agricultural land or rural communities. By tempering the overall RPS requirement, SB 706 reduces the pressure for rapid expansion of large-scale renewable facilities, especially utility-grade solar, that threaten farmland preservation and agricultural viability across the state.

Maryland's farmers are strong supporters of balanced, practical energy solutions. MDFB supports a diverse mix of energy sources—including wind, solar, biofuels, methane recovery, and on-farm renewables—but only when implemented in ways that remain affordable and respect agricultural land-use priorities. SB 706 is a measured correction that helps recalibrate Maryland's energy mandate to ensure that the transition to cleaner energy does not undermine the economic sustainability of the state's largest industry: agriculture.

For these reasons, the Maryland Farm Bureau respectfully supports SB 706 and urges a favorable report.

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Tyler Hough
Director of Government Relations
Please contact Tyler Hough, though@marylandfb.org, with any questions

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Uploaded by: Alex Pavlak

Position: FWA

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Written testimony

NEW BILL TITLE:

Sustainable Energy Portfolio Standard

NEW GOAL:

Net-zero, energy independent Maryland (no date)

Baltimore Sun February 1, 2026

Where's the Vision for Maryland Net-Zero?

In 2022, the Maryland General Assembly passed the Climate Solutions Now Act, committing the state to "net-zero by 2045." It sounds firm, righteous, and vaguely scientific. But what does it mean exactly?

"Net-zero," as defined by the International Panel on Climate Change, is a global emissions concept. It balances greenhouse gas emissions and removals across the entire planet. This makes good sense on a planetary scale, or perhaps on an island with no imports/exports. But Maryland is neither.

Maryland imports roughly 40 percent of its electricity from the PJM regional grid. So, what does "net-zero" mean here? Zero emissions from generators inside the state, while importing power from fossil plants next door? Or zero emissions from the energy that Maryland actually consumes, wherever it is made? The law does not say. This ambiguity is not clever; it is fatal. An fuzzy goal guarantees confused analysis and fantasy schedules.

A sound goal, aligned with the IPCC definition, would be something like this***: a sustainable, net-zero, electricity-independent Maryland***. No date yet. Dates are cheap; systems are not. If Maryland built such a system and it would be compatible with global net-zero. Anything less is accounting theater.

So what does a reliable net-zero system look like?

Maryland has already paid for three 100% studies. All three failed in the same instructive ways. They assumed electricity could be imported and exported across political boundaries at historical prices, forever. Two of them relied on average renewable production rather than hourly dispatch. Wind never goes to zero in those models. None grappled honestly with intermittency and whole-system reliability.

The result is complexity without wisdom, and models that flatter intermittent renewables.

Maryland needs is a professional engineering concept study, a big-picture sketch done by people who understand how power systems work, who have built things before, and who are not emotionally attached to particular solutions. Such a study would not design the system; it would define its structure. It would tell us how much wind, solar, nuclear, and storage are necessary if we insist on reliability. Even simple back-of-the-envelope and spreadsheet models, using historical hourly data, tell a more consistent story.

Dr. Alex Pavlak; Future of Energy Initiative; www.pavlak.net; www.FutureOfEnergyInitiative.org
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PV generation paired with four-hour storage can economically and reliably supply about 15 percent of system energy by smoothing daily ups and downs. Wind helps only when fossil fuels dominate the grid but adds little value to a system that is already clean. The fatal limit for renewables is not ideology; it is intermittency cost and weather.

Every few years, usually in December, the system encounters a Dunkelflaute—an energy drought lasting a week or two, with little wind and little sun. Designing a 100% renewables system that survives those events without blackouts drives costs to five or ten times that of today's fossil system.

These conclusions are unlikely to change with more elaborate modeling. We now have historical wind and solar data going back to 1940, consistent cost databases, and decades of grid experience. Concept models assume perfect transmission and closed system boundaries because we are defining generation technology proportions, limits, boundaries, cost and weather sensitivity, not pouring concrete.

Which brings us to the big picture vision.

A sustainable, net-zero, electricity-independent system would look roughly like this: about 15 percent solar, some form of storage, the remaining 85 percent nuclear. Offshore wind would be politely thanked for its interim service and dismissed. Baseload nuclear does the heavy lifting.

Powering Maryland at today's energy consumption levels would require roughly a dozen large (GW scale) nuclear reactors. The state currently has two. America would need on the order of a thousand; it has ninety-four. This assumes no growth in demand.

Over half of those 1,000 new nuclear plants would be located along US coastlines because that is the economical way to get enough environmentally acceptable cooling.

The near-term policy implications are uncomfortable but obvious:

- Preserve existing power plant sites like Brandon Shores.
- Replace coal with natural gas under transitional ownership structures such as a States owned Power Authority.
- As nuclear technology matures and exclusion zones shrink, convert those gas plants to nuclear.
- And invite data centers—those ravenous, reliability-obsessed creatures—to build their own nuclear plants along the Chesapeake Bay. Nuclear costs more than natural gas today, but data centers can afford the premium and the first-mover risk. In return, they get power they own, control, and can count on—while lowering overall system costs for themselves and the commercial grid.

Maryland does not lack ambition or stubborn persistence. But we are not learning and adapting to new knowledge. Until the State creates a sound vision of the big picture, decides what sustainable net-zero systems actually look like, it will continue mistaking motion for progress.

Dr. Alex Pavlak is a PhD Professional Engineer, Severna Park resident, and the chair of the Future of Energy Initiative, whose mission is to facilitate the development of sustainable, affordable clean energy systems.

SB 706 - CBF - UNF.pdf
Uploaded by: Matt Stegman
Position: UNF

CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Senate Bill 706
Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard – Alterations

Date: February 26, 2026
To: Senate Education, Energy, & Environment Committee
Position: **UNFAVORABLE**
From: Gussie Maguire, MD Staff Scientist

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **OPPOSES Senate Bill 706** which significantly lowers targets set by the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard for Tier I renewable sources.

The Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS) is a critical piece of Maryland's response to climate change; weakening its provisions as residents across the state have already and continue to experience disastrous flooding, dangerous heat, and other consequences of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions puts Marylanders at risk. Reneging on commitments to move away from fossil fuels also endangers progress made to restore Maryland's ecosystems: atmospheric nitrogen, a significant by-product of burning fossil fuels and contributor to nutrient pollution, is then deposited in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Nutrient pollution leads to algal blooms and dead zones and places stress on the Bay's aquatic species, from blue crabs to striped bass; the species that feed on them; and on Maryland's seafood industry. Maryland cannot afford to back down from the targets set in the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard.

CBF urges the Committee's UNFAVORABLE report on SB 706.

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at mstegman@cbf.org.

SB0706 - LOC- Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard

Uploaded by: Megan Outten

Position: UNF

Maryland Energy Administration

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
FROM: MEA
SUBJECT: SB 706 - Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Alterations
DATE: February 26, 2026

MEA Position: Letter of Concern

The Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) respectfully submits this Letter of Concern regarding Senate Bill 706.

SB 706 would significantly reduce the State's Tier 1 Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS) requirements beginning in compliance year 2027 and continuing thereafter. Specifically, the bill lowers the Tier 1 requirement from 41.5% to 26% in 2027 and reduces the long-term 2030 and beyond requirement from 50% to 34.5%, while maintaining certain carve-outs for solar, offshore wind, and geothermal resources.

Maryland's RPS serves as a foundational policy mechanism for driving renewable energy deployment, providing long-term market certainty, and supporting private investment in clean energy infrastructure. The current trajectory toward 50% Tier 1 renewable energy was adopted through deliberate legislative action and reflects the State's broader climate commitments, economic development strategy, and grid modernization planning.

Reducing the Tier 1 requirement would materially alter market demand for renewable energy credits (RECs), which could affect financing assumptions for existing and planned renewable energy projects. While the bill includes language preserving existing contractual obligations, future project development, workforce investments, and supply chain growth rely heavily on predictable compliance targets.

The RPS also supports Maryland's long-term greenhouse gas reduction goals. Lowering Tier 1 requirements may require the State to identify alternative pathways to achieve statutory climate targets, potentially shifting compliance pressure to other sectors or programs.

In addition, the RPS has been a driver of in-State solar development, offshore wind procurement, and emerging geothermal deployment. Market stability remains an important consideration as these sectors continue to scale and integrate into Maryland's energy portfolio.

MEA recognizes the importance of evaluating ratepayer impacts and maintaining affordability. At the same time, adjustments to core compliance targets warrant careful review given their implications for investment certainty, climate policy alignment, and long-term system planning.

For these reasons, MEA respectfully submits this Letter of Concern for the Committee's consideration.

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.