



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 12, 2026

Delegate Marc Korman
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee

Re: HB460 Solar Energy- Construction of Generating Stations in Priority Preservation Areas and Study Favorable

Dear Chair Korman, Vice-Chair Guyton, and Esteemed Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

HB 460 seeks to protect Maryland's Priority Preservation Areas (PPAs) while ensuring responsible long-term planning for solar energy infrastructure.

Maryland's grain and poultry farmers—particularly on the Eastern Shore—depend on access to contiguous, productive farmland. PPAs were created to safeguard this land base. Under current law, up to **5%** of a PPA may be used for solar energy generating stations. HB 460 reduces that allowable footprint to **2%**, preserving the integrity of PPAs while still permitting targeted solar development.

HB 460 amends §7-218(h)(4) of the Public Utilities Article to:

- Lower the cap on solar siting in PPAs from **5% to 2%**;
- Maintain all existing siting and project-area requirements;
- Require counties to report when the 2% threshold is reached; and
- Clarify that once the 2% limit is met, local zoning prohibitions do not apply to the remaining 98% of the PPA.

This adjustment responds directly to concerns raised by farmers, agricultural preservation advocates, and local governments. Solar energy is essential to Maryland's clean-energy goals, but its placement must not undermine the agricultural economy that sustains rural communities and supports the state's poultry industry. More than 95% of grain grown on the Eastern Shore feeds poultry; losing farmland in concentrated areas threatens the stability of both sectors.

HB 460 also requires the Maryland Department of the Environment to study the environmental impacts of disposing of solar photovoltaic systems at the end of their life cycle and to report

findings to the General Assembly by September 30, 2027. **As** solar deployment expands, Maryland must plan responsibly for long-term waste management and environmental protection.

HB 460 offers a balanced approach: it preserves critical agricultural land, supports the viability of grain and poultry farmers, and ensures that Maryland's renewable-energy transition remains environmentally responsible.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a **Favorable Report** on HB 460.

Delegate Barry Beauchamp

District 38B