



WICOMICO COUNTY, MARYLAND

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Environment & Transportation Committee
250 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB0460 Letter of Support – Solar Energy – Construction of Generating Stations in Priority Preservation Areas and Study

Dear Chairman Korman and members of the committee:

I am writing in strong support of the bill entitled **Solar Energy – Construction of Generating Stations in Priority Preservation Areas and Study**.

This legislation strikes a thoughtful and necessary balance between advancing renewable energy goals and protecting Maryland's most valuable agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands. By reducing the allowable use of Priority Preservation Area acreage for certain solar energy generating stations from 5% to 2%, the bill provides a meaningful safeguard for farmland preservation while still allowing for responsible solar development.

At present, the 5% threshold represents more than 9,000 acres of land in Wicomico County that could be converted away from agricultural use. In many jurisdictions, this level of conversion poses a real risk to long-term food production, rural character, and the economic viability of farming communities. Reducing this cap to 2% ensures that solar development remains targeted and intentional, rather than expansive and irreversible, particularly in areas specifically designated for preservation.

Importantly, this bill does not oppose solar energy. Rather, it reinforces the principle that renewable energy policy should be implemented in a way that respects local land-use priorities, protects prime farmland, and maintains the integrity of preservation programs that Maryland has invested in for decades.

The bill's requirement that the Maryland Department of the Environment study the environmental impacts of solar photovoltaic system disposal is also both timely and prudent. As solar installations age and reach the end of their useful life, the state must be prepared to address issues related to waste management, recycling, and potential environmental contamination. Requiring a formal study and report to the General Assembly by September 30, 2027, ensures that future policy decisions will be informed by data, science, and long-term environmental considerations.

In short, this legislation supports clean energy while reaffirming Maryland's commitment to farmland preservation, environmental responsibility, and smart growth. I respectfully urge a favorable report on this bill.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued work on behalf of Maryland's communities.

Respectfully,

WICOMICO COUNTY, MARYLAND



Julie M. Giordano
County Executive