



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 345 - PUBLIC UTILITIES - SOLAR ENERGY GENERATING SYSTEMS AND SOLAR
RENEWABLE ENERGY CREDITS (AFFORDABLE SOLAR ACT)

TESTIMONY OF DELEGATE LORIG CHARKOUDIAN
FEBRUARY 10, 2026

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

The federal administration launched an assault on ratepayers across the nation by increasing taxes on clean energy projects and throwing up additional roadblocks to getting them built. Trump is doing everything possible to raise utility bills and line the pockets of his billionaire fossil fuel buddies. We are fighting back. Maryland needs to stand up to Trump and prove that we are committed to lowering utility bills and advancing clean energy.

Solar energy is the fastest and most cost effective way to build new electricity generation. Solar energy has the ability to lower utility bills, stabilize costs, and provide clean energy for a decarbonized future.

In 2023, Maryland passed the Brighter Tomorrow Act, a short term bridge to ensure rooftop and community solar continued to get built, with a commitment to legislate a long term structural fix within a few years.. The time is now to ensure long term stability for ongoing solar deployment in Maryland to meet our growing energy needs and our clean energy goals.

This bill codifies solar energy solutions:

- ✓ Reforms the current incentive program (Solar Renewable Energy Credit Program) to protect ratepayers and ensure solar incentives are tailored to the industry market segment.
- The bill phases out the current solar subsidy program and replaces it with a program called "SREC 2". The program is designed similar to the process used in New Jersey since 2020, and is expected to lead to the development of 4,000 MW of new solar by 2035.
- The new model is different from our current SREC program in two ways. First, the PSC will conduct competitive procurements for utility scale solar, ensuring that these systems are built with the best value for rate-payers. Second, the PSC will establish incentive prices for rooftop and community solar and recalculate these on a regular basis, based on

changes in the market and federal policy. This will also ensure that each type of solar will receive enough to be built and no industry sector will receive more in incentives than necessary.

✓ No Rate-payer Impact

- This legislation shifts funds already being paid by rate-payers through Alternative Compliance Payments into an escrow account which will be used to implement the new solar procurement model. An analysis conducted by the Maryland Public Service Commissions suggests this bill can be implemented with no change in rate-payer contributions to the RPS for at least the next several years.

✓ Enables portable solar, also known as balcony solar

- Portable solar offers a scalable, safe, and affordable solution to build more solar. Compact portable systems plug directly into a standard outlet and require no rooftop installation. These projects have already been authorized by law in Utah and, in fact, are sold at IKEA because they are so popular and easy to put together.
- Portable solar systems feed power into the home to offset consumption, reducing household electricity bills, mitigating climate warming emissions, and, when paired with a battery, offering energy resilience to households. Traditional rooftop solar is unavailable to many Marylanders, particularly renters, lower-income households, and homeowners with shaded or otherwise unsuitable roofs. Balcony/portable solar projects makes solar more widely available to low income Marylanders and renters.

I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 345.