



House Bill 460

Position: **Support**

To: Environment and Transportation Committee

Date: February 6, 2026

From: County Commissioners of Worcester County

Worcester County supports House Bill 460, a piece of legislation that makes minor yet necessary improvements to the energy changes approved at the state level last year.

In 2025, Maryland lawmakers passed a variety of laws aimed at securing the state's clean energy future. While those laws promote renewable energy, they inhibit local government's ability to weigh in on land use decisions. This bill essentially makes a slight adjustment to one piece of last year's legislation. HB 460 changes the amount for priority preservation area that can be used for solar from 5% to 2%. Here in Worcester County, the 5% figure equates to 10,310 acres. That's 10,310 acres of priority preservation area that can be covered in solar panels before the county has the ability to deny a solar site plan or make any changes that would prohibit solar development. The 5% figure for Worcester equals an acreage figure nearly 60% of the state's solar goal in a single county. All we're asking for here is a small reduction in that figure.

Maryland is already a net importer of grain used as feed for livestock operations across the state. Less farmland means reduced local grain production, increasing dependence on imported feed. This reliance carries a significant carbon cost, as transporting grain by rail and container ship generates substantially higher CO₂ emissions per metric ton compared to local production. Converting farmland to solar installations further exacerbates this challenge, overlooking agriculture's critical role in enhancing ecosystem resilience. Moreover, these increased transportation emissions run counter to the very goals of renewable energy development, undermining efforts to reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions. The question remains: Can Maryland modernize its energy infrastructure without compromising its conservation and climate objectives?

This bill also requires the Maryland Department of the Environment to study the disposal of solar voltaic systems. More information on decommissioning has been needed for years. How can regulators make responsible judgments regarding decommissioning bonds without data related to the disposal of solar infrastructure?

Please support House Bill 460 and its minor, commonsense adjustments to last year's sweeping legislation.