



Enhancing and Advancing Land Conservation

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
Annapolis, Maryland

cc: Members, House Environment and Transportation Committee

Dear Chair Korman and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Forever Maryland, we write in **strong support of House Bill 460 – Solar Energy - Construction of Generating Stations in Priority Preservation Areas and Study.**

Forever Maryland is the statewide coalition representing nearly 30 land trusts and land conservation organizations. Land trusts work in every region of the state to conserve farms, forests, waterways, wildlife habitat, and culturally significant landscapes in collaboration with state and local government and a wide variety of other conservation nonprofits.

Forever Maryland supports smart siting of energy and transmission infrastructure that does not compromise longstanding land use planning, rural communities and industries, and environmental stewardship. We strongly support policies that maximize siting on built infrastructure, brownfields, or other marginal lands and that minimize siting on productive soils and environmentally sensitive areas.

HB sensibly reduces the burden of solar siting within county Priority Preservation Areas from 5% to 2% of land.

Priority Preservation Areas (PPAs), as defined by the Code of Maryland, contains lands with “productive agricultural or forest soils,” and are meant to “stabilize the agricultural and forest land base so that development does not convert or compromise agricultural or forest resources.” Counties are further encouraged to preserve at least 80% of the remaining undeveloped land in the PPA.

Not only is agriculture Maryland’s top economic industry, but the preservation of farm and forest land is essential to achieving the State’s broader conservation and climate goals. Preserved lands store carbon, increase climate resilience, protect biodiversity, and help maintain connected natural landscapes.

Forever Maryland and the undersigned organizations respectfully urge the Committee to issue a **favorable report on HB 460**. Thank you for your consideration and for your continued leadership on behalf of Maryland's communities, landscapes, and future generations.

Forever Maryland member organizations

American Chestnut Land Trust	Land Trust Alliance
Baltimore County Land Trust Coalition	Land Preservation Trust
Baltimore Green Space	Long Green Land Trust
Casey Trees	Lower Shore Land Trust
Catoctin Land Trust	Magothy River Land Trust
Cecil Land Trust	NeighborSpace of Baltimore County
Chesapeake Conservancy	Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust
Conservancy For Charles County	Potomac Conservancy
Crownsville Conservancy	Rockburn Land Trust
Eastern Shore Land Conservancy	Scenic Rivers Land Trust
Green Trust Alliance	The Manor Conservancy
Gunpowder Valley Conservancy	The Nature Conservancy
Harford Land Trust	Trust For Public Land
Howard County Conservancy	The Conservation Fund