



February 20, 2026

**MAREC ACTION TESTIMONY HB 897/SB 386: FAVORABLE WITH AMEDMENTS**

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

MAREC Action (informally, “Mid-Atlantic Renewable Energy Coalition”) writes in support of HB0897 and SB0386, Electricity Transmission and Distribution, Energy Storage, and Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund (Lower Bills and Local Power Act of 2026). MAREC Action is a Maryland-based coalition of over 50 utility-scale solar, wind, and battery storage developers and manufacturers dedicated to the growth and development of renewable energy across the PJM grid region.

HB897/SB386 creates a Solar and Energy Storage Market Stabilization Program within the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA). This program would provide grants to “shovel ready” solar and solar paired with battery storage projects through a lowest cost competitive bidding process, allowing near term projects that may have lost federal tax credits or have other financial hurdles to come online within the next few years. We appreciate the effort of the sponsors and Administration to deploy more clean, reliable, solar energy onto the grid as soon as possible.

We know energy affordability is a key concern for Marylanders. A regional imbalance electricity supply and demand is driving up the wholesale cost of electricity. As a result, the best way to stabilize rising wholesale energy prices is to add zero fuel cost resources like solar and wind to the grid. Because solar and wind have no fuel cost, they will support stability in consumer bills, effectively diversify the electricity supply, and reduce costly periods of peak demand that strain fuel supplies during cold winters like this one.

Building a new power plant (solar or otherwise) is comparatively expensive in Maryland, due to a lack of transmission infrastructure, high land prices, and existing incentive levels that are lower than neighboring states. These challenges are not unique to solar, and we anticipate that any new power plant (including new natural gas) will need incentives to build. Utility-scale solar’s low cost, relative to other sources, enhances the value and timeliness of the Program proposed in HB897/SB386.

The Solar and Energy Storage Market Stabilization Program proposed in HB 897/SB386 would be funded from the Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SEIF). As a one-time, upfront grant program, the incentive would need to be sized appropriately to ensure the program’s effectiveness in attracting investment away from other states with more robust long-term incentives. It is encouraging to see that the program could be stood up and begin accepting applications as early as December 2026, helping to ensure its effectiveness as a bridge policy for near-term projects that may have lost federal tax incentives to be able to come online. There are



utility-scale solar projects in Maryland with a combined capacity of 230 megawatts that have late-stage PJM queue positions and would be best positioned to receive support as “shovel ready” projects.

MAREC Action is supportive of other provisions in HB897/SB386, especially developing incentives for advanced transmission technologies and requiring the Secretary of Transportation to develop a process to allow transmission infrastructure or energy storage systems to be located within existing highway rights-of-way. While greenfield transmission and energy storage projects remain critical to meeting growing energy demand, this bill takes an important step forward to maximize available land in existing corridors for these resources.

MAREC Action looks forward to working with the sponsors and Administration to refine this proposal in the context of other legislation proposed this session looking to modernize Maryland’s solar incentive structure. It is vital to the utility-scale solar industry that reforms occur this year to ensure near term projects can come online and to spur a stronger development pipeline for future projects.

We thank the Committee for your close consideration and ask that you take a favorable position on this legislation to allow refinements to continue throughout the session.

Thank you,

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