



February 10, 2026

Support - HB 345 - Public Utilities - Solar Energy Generating Systems and Solar Renewable Energy Credits (Affordable Solar Act)

Mr Chair & Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

Healthy Climate Maryland supports HB 345, the Affordable Solar Act. We are supporting legislation this session that shifts the state away from using fossil fuels to generate energy. Late last year, Physicians for Social Responsibility alongside a number of national health organizations, released [a new report](#) detailing the health impacts of fossil fuel pollution. People living near fossil fuel burning facilities experience a daily assault from increased air pollution coupled with increased odor and noise, compounded with the impacts greenhouse gas emissions from these plants have on climate change. Supporting the deployment of more clean, renewable energy is the solution, and right now also the cheapest form of energy. The Affordable Solar Act right-sizes Maryland's solar market to spur development and initiates a portable solar program that makes solar more accessible to renters and lower income households.

Health Impacts of Fossil Fuel Emissions and Climate Change

Climate change impacts our health in myriad ways. As we state in our [climate change overview factsheet](#), **"The main contributor to climate change is the burning of fossil fuels for energy, transportation, and industry.** [Burning fossil fuels increases health hazards](#) through climate instability and the pollution it generates. Pollutants like ozone and PM2.5 degrade air quality, contributing to a range of health problems." Hotter and drier conditions create fuel for wildfires, while hotter and wetter conditions expand habitats and ranges for mosquitoes and other disease-carrying vectors. Increased heat and air pollution from greenhouse gas emissions make it harder for people with respiratory illnesses to breathe, like children with asthma, pregnant people, and older adults. Increasing days with extreme heat lead to increased heat-related deaths, hospitalizations, and emergency room visits as well as their associated health care costs.

Costs of Climate Change, and Benefits of Climate Investments

In 2021, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) published a [report](#) that found that climate change and fossil fuel pollution result in \$820 billion in health costs annually. This number reflects costs seen through premature deaths, medical care for treatment of physical and mental health conditions, rehabilitation and home health care, prescription medications, lost wages and worker productivity, and downstream health costs (e.g. homelessness after a disaster). And in contrast, [The American Lung Association](#) **estimates that transitioning to cleaner vehicles and energy sources could generate \$1.2 trillion in health benefits, prevent 110,000 premature deaths, and avoid 13 million lost workdays.** These are not abstract numbers—they reflect the real-world gains we can achieve by protecting clean air and reducing emissions.



For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 345.

About Healthy Climate Maryland

Mission: United by a shared commitment to the health and well-being of all Marylanders, our coalition of dedicated health professionals and allies seeks to address climate change and environmental threats by focusing on their impacts on public health.

Vision: Maryland is leading the nation in clean air and water and climate resiliency as a result of equitable policies, personal actions, and advocacy in communities across the state. We are taking all possible measures to protect the health of everyone in Maryland, and the health of our climate