

**Testimony on: HB1104 – Residential Solar Energy Systems - Local Inspections and Permitting**  
**Committee: Environment & Transportation**  
**Submitting: Deborah A. Cohn**  
**Position: Favorable**  
**Hearing Date: March 3, 2026**

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton and Committee Members:

I am urging this Committee's favorable report on HB1104 - Residential Solar Energy Systems Local Inspections and Permitting.

Maryland has long fallen short on attaining its solar energy goals under the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards and Climate Solutions Now Act. While we will always be a net importer of energy, the more renewable electricity we can affordably generate in-state, the less we will be dependent on importing fossil fuel based electricity from other states and the high costs of building transmission lines.

As electricity prices have soared in Maryland, more homeowners are considering rooftop solar to get some control over their electricity costs. HB1104 helps them while benefitting all other electricity users in the state. The bill supports residential solar by dramatically reducing the cost, time and complexity of installing residential solar energy and battery storage systems.

HB1104, which was developed based on the experience of several other states, streamlines and simplifies the permitting and inspection process for installing residential solar energy and battery storage systems. The bill requires counties to institute instant permitting and simplifies the inspection process. HB1104 would allow inspections to be handled remotely with video or photo confirmation, while ensuring a high level of safety.

Interconnection to the grid often can take months. HB1104 addresses this by allowing certified installers to "pull the meter," which allows for a safe interconnection without having to deal with frustratingly slow utilities. The bill caps permitting costs to actual expenditures, prohibiting jurisdictions from charging unreasonable fees to discourage solar and battery installations. Finally, HB1104 implements a uniform building code which standardizes installations and thus homeowner costs. All of these changes reduce the friction that discourages homeowners to consider rooftop solar.

A 2019 study by the Solar Energy Industries Association showed that existing permitting and inspection issues can add as much as \$7,000 to the cost of a residential system and delay installation and operation by months. These unnecessary costs and delays make systems less affordable HB1104 will reduce these costs and delays, saving money for Maryland homeowners, increasing in-state electricity generation, shaving peak demand, and helping Maryland to reach its climate goals under the Climate Solutions Now Act.

For these reasons I urge a FAVORABLE report on HB1104.