



Wes Moore | Governor  
Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor  
Harry Coker, Jr. | Secretary of Commerce

**DATE:** March 3, 2026  
**BILL NO:** House Bill 1104  
**BILL TITLE:** Residential Solar Energy Systems - Local Inspections and Permitting  
**COMMITTEE:** House Environment and Transportation  
**POSITION:** Support with Amendment

The Maryland Department of Commerce (Commerce) supports House Bill 1104 - Residential Solar Energy Systems - Local Inspections and Permitting.

### **Bill Summary:**

This bill aims to streamline and standardize the permitting and inspection process for residential solar installations. The bill would extend the deadline for counties and municipalities to adopt standardized solar permitting software to August 1, 2027, and require local governments to allow residential solar inspections to be conducted remotely (via recorded video or photos), with limits on costs and timing. It would also bar local jurisdictions from requiring manual reviews during permitting, cap residential solar permitting fees at \$200, and limit local reviews of applications to health and safety requirements only.

Commerce supports the amendment proposed by the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) to strike language permitting the delay or suspension of certain requirements due to insufficient federal or State funding to support solar permitting software.

### **Rationale:**

House Bill 1104 would improve the permitting and inspection processes for residential solar and storage. The current permitting and inspection process in many jurisdictions in Maryland can be onerous and opaque to residents as well as solar companies, often resulting in Maryland residents paying more for the installation of solar panels. An average residential solar project in Maryland costs \$38,000 for a 14.4 kW system without incentives when some sources suggest that, thanks to the reductions in time and other indirect costs associated with the permitting processes, this same project could cost \$19,000-\$25,000 less with the types of reforms included in HB 1104.

Currently, solar companies and residents may need many rounds of interactions with local permitting agencies, often with paper documents. This process can take months and is both time-intensive and costly for businesses and residents alike. Automated permitting provides certainty to businesses and reduces permitting time from months to two or three days. Additionally, managing inspections is another major soft cost for businesses. A solar company in Maryland frequently needs to leave an employee at a homeowner's house to wait for an inspector, often for several hours. This is costly, particularly if multiple inspections are required. Automated permitting software and remote inspections have successfully reduced cost and time to project completion in other jurisdictions while maintaining safety.

The reforms included in HB 1104 would be good for Maryland businesses by simplifying the permitting and inspection process, allowing jobs to be completed more rapidly with less overhead costs. Furthermore, by bringing down the costs for Maryland residents, the bill would make residential solar installations and storage more attractive. This could possibly result in increased demand for Maryland-based solar companies. Lastly, this will help to increase the pace of residential solar installations which will help the State reach its renewable energy goals, increasing the amount of energy on the grid and reducing the need for new transmission infrastructure.

Commerce respectfully requests a favorable report with amendments as proposed by the Maryland Energy Administration on House Bill 1104.