



HB0345 - SUPPORT

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Solar Energy Generating Systems and Solar Renewable Energy Credits (Affordable Solar Act)

Environment and Transportation Committee
February 10th, 2025

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of 350 Montgomery County*, I urge a favorable report on HB0345, Solar Energy Generating Systems and Solar Renewable Energy Credits (Affordable Solar Act). We are confident that HB0345 provides real solutions to our increased energy demands and rising electricity costs. Most importantly, HB0345 gives Marylanders control over our energy future and allows us to be leaders on clean energy.

As you are aware, Maryland families face some of the highest electricity costs in the nation with no signs of this trend ending.¹ HB0345 offers cost protection to ratepayers while moving forward with energy that does not contribute to global warming or pollute our environment. And **solar energy is the fastest and most cost effective way to build new electricity generation.** The key to ensuring rate protection is HB0345's creation of an escrow account system that provides transparency and prevents utilities from passing excessive costs to customers.

A truly outstanding feature of HB0345 is that it makes solar energy accessible to everyone independently of owning a house. We believe energy independence should be available to *all* Marylanders and this bill breaks down the barriers that have kept solar access out of reach for many. The Affordable Solar Act provides energy justice by enabling portable solar, also known as **balcony solar which opens the door for renters to participate and benefit in the clean energy economy.** A typical balcony system can reduce apartment electricity bills by 10-30%.

¹Maryland named most expensive state for utilities, report finds.

<https://foxbaltimore.com/news/local/maryland-named-most-expensive-state-for-utilities-report-finds>

*350MoCo's mission is to solve the climate crisis by working to address its root causes, including economic and social inequity. We are the Montgomery County chapter of the non-profit, citizens' activist group 350.org, with nearly 2,000 local supporters. Visit us at 350MoCo.org.

Compact portable systems plug directly into a standard outlet and require no rooftop installation. These projects have already been authorized by law in Utah and are even sold at IKEA now due to their popularity and ease of use.²

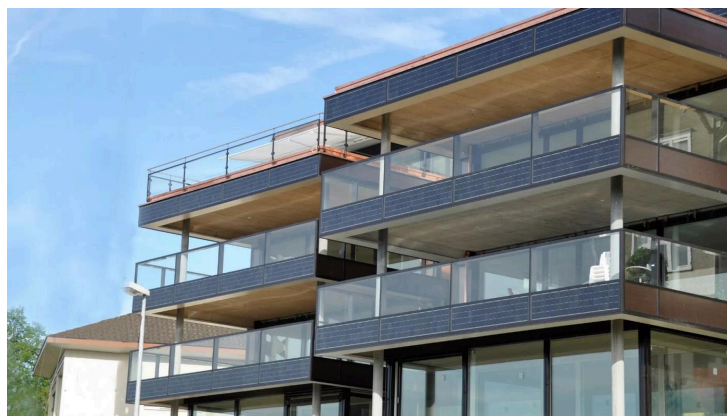
Finally, the federal administration has launched an assault on ratepayers across the nation by increasing taxes on clean energy projects and throwing up arbitrary roadblocks to getting them built. Let's have Maryland fight back and prove that we are committed to lowering utility bills and advancing clean energy.

For all of these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB0345.

Thank you for your careful consideration.

Sincerely,

Kristin Cook
Steering Committee Member of 350MoCo



²Balcony solar took off in Germany. Why not the US?
<https://grist.org/energy/balcony-solar-took-off-in-germany-why-not-the-us/>