

HB1104: Residential Solar Energy Systems - Local Inspections and Permitting

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Environment and Transportation

FAVORABLE

Maryland PIRG is a state based, small donor funded public interest advocacy organization with grassroots members across the state. We work to find common ground around common sense solutions that will help ensure a healthier, safer, more secure future

Environment Maryland promotes clean air, clean water, clean energy, wildlife and open spaces, and a livable climate. Our members put grassroots support behind our research, public education, advocacy and litigation.

Putting solar panels on rooftops makes sense for the environment and saves people money, but too often red tape gets in the way. In many Maryland communities, it can take weeks or even months to get approval to put solar panels on your roof. There's a patchwork of different requirements in cities and counties that contributes to higher costs and delays statewide. It doesn't need to be this way.

Our groups urge support for HB1104, with sponsor amendments, to streamline and speed up permitting for residential solar and batteries in Maryland. This legislation will make it easier and less expensive for Marylanders to install residential solar and batteries to lower electric bills, reduce peak demand, and reduce pollution.

This may sound familiar to the committee, [as you passed similar legislation in 2024.](#)

Unfortunately, some counties are not complying with the requirement to adopt automated permitting. And as more and more Marylanders are interested in solar in the face of high electric supply costs, it is urgent that you address the permitting delays and challenges that are making it harder for energy customers to make solar happen.

Installing a rooftop solar system should be as fast and easy as possible, without compromising health and safety. Unfortunately, the permit process can be complex, cumbersome, and costly, making it hard for solar installers to do business in some Maryland communities, and making it too hard for Maryland energy customers to adopt solar. Maryland can't afford that kind of inefficiency for something as common-sense as rooftop solar.

Helping Marylanders adopt solar has benefit for everyone:

- With rooftop solar, Maryland households can see as much as \$2,300 in savings yearly and \$76,000 in savings over the life of the system;
- Residential solar alleviates strain on the electrical grid; and can even help reduce peak demand;

- Enhances resilience against extreme weather and increased demand;
- Adds new in-state energy generation with no additional land-use footprint; and,
- Reduces homeowners' electricity bills, and enables them to sell back excess electricity.

Rooftop solar is one of the best energy sources for Maryland. Because it generates clean energy that can be used on-site, rooftop solar can reduce strain on the grid, increase the grid's resilience to threats like extreme weather, and decrease dependence on polluting fossil fuels.

According to a report from Environment Maryland Research & Policy Center and Frontier Group, small-scale solar energy – of which rooftop is the largest contributor – has grown in Maryland, producing enough electricity to power 119,694 households in 2022. While our rooftop solar progress is encouraging, we're just scratching the surface of our rooftop solar potential.

This bill isn't about adding financial incentives for solar, it's simply about cutting red tape and making it easier for Marylanders who want to go solar to do so, making it a win-win for the budget and for energy customers. More solar means a stronger grid, less pollution and lower costs.

It's time to unleash the potential of solar in Maryland.

We respectfully recommend a favorable report.