



## **CLIMATE COALITION**

### **Montgomery County, MD**

**Bill: HB345 - Public Utilities - Solar Energy Generating Systems and Solar Renewable Energy Credit (Affordable Solar Act)**

**House Committee: Environment and Transportation**

**Organization: Climate Coalition, Montgomery County**

**Submitting: Karl Held**

**Position: Favorable**

**Hearing Date: February 10, 2025**

Dear Chair Del Korman, Vice Chair Del Guyton, and Committee Members,

The Climate Mobilization, Montgomery County (TCM) urges to vote **favorably** on HB345, Solar Energy Generating Systems and Solar Renewable Energy Credits (Affordable Solar Act). This bill will help establish the foundation Marylanders need to join the transition to clean and affordable energy that our times demand.

Marylanders are ready for change. Right now, Maryland families face some of the highest electricity costs in the nation and those costs keep rising. Electricity capacity auctions have cleared at record-high prices for the second year in a row.

Maryland families deserve real solutions that give us control over our energy future, not just more expensive bills.

We are ready to build a system that protects ratepayers while moving forward with clean energy. The bill does this in several ways.

First, it restructures the current Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) by directing the Public Service Commission (PSC) to create administratively determined incentive levels for Solar Renewable Energy Credits (SRECs). This follows the lead of multiple states such as New Jersey, which have similarly made their RPS more cost effective using this new structure. The incentives will be tailored according to market segments such as residential, non-residential, and community solar, making the program more cost effective for the ratepayer, while ensuring forward-looking market growth. For larger, utility-scale projects, it directs the PSC to conduct a competitive procurement, driving down the cost of the incentive and creating the best value for the ratepayer. This will spur 4,000MW of new, in-state generation, reducing our dependence on out-of-state imported energy, while creating good paying Maryland-based jobs.

Secondly, it creates a new clean energy fund administered by the major utilities, and directs all proceeds from the Strategic Energy Investment Fund to this fund, which can only be used to build new, cost effective, in-state clean energy generation. In this way,

funds that are paid by the ratepayer for clean energy investment can only be used for this purpose.

Third, HB345 makes solar energy accessible to everyone independently of owning a house or not. The portable solar provisions open the door for renters to finally participate in the clean energy economy. A typical balcony system can reduce apartment electricity bills by 10-30%. We believe energy independence should be available to all Marylanders, not just those who own homes, and this bill breaks down such barriers that have kept solar access out of reach.

For these reasons, TCM urges a **Favorable** report on HB345. Thank you for your consideration.