



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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Delegate Marc Korman, Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee
250 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT of House Bill 345: Public Utilities - Solar Energy Generating Systems and Solar Renewable Energy Credits (Affordable Solar Act)

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

Climate action and environmental justice are high priorities for Howard County. Our June 2023 *Climate Forward: Climate Action and Resiliency Plan* sets ambitious goals to reduce greenhouse gases by 60% by 2030 and achieve net-zero emissions by 2045. Clean energy deployment is vital to meeting our goals. Even though solar and wind energy are cheaper than fossil fuels, the federal government is throwing up unwise roadblocks to clean energy. This makes it imperative for states and local jurisdictions to facilitate clean energy deployment. By reforming the state's Solar Renewable Energy Credit (SREC) program, HB345 would incentivize utility-scale solar, community solar, and rooftop solar development. HB345 also would ensure that funds from the SREC program are used to boost solar development in Maryland, ensuring the addition of 4,000 MW of solar capacity.

As noted in my January 23, 2026 Baltimore Sun op-ed, "*Let's Empower More Marylanders with Balcony Solar*," HB345 would also enable Marylanders to avail of plug-in or "balcony" solar. During my 2024 economic trade mission to Europe, I saw how incredibly popular balcony solar systems have become, especially among renters. Balcony solar offers an affordable entry point to cleaner power while reducing household energy bills without the need for complex installations, structural modifications, or cumbersome utility interconnection agreements.

Now is the time to ensure that the clean energy transition does not leave out vulnerable communities that can benefit from cheaper, home-grown electricity. Utah has already enacted such legislation and many other states are poised to follow suit. This is a simple yet transformative move that would democratize solar access and create cleaner and cheaper electricity for Marylanders. For these reasons, I request the Committee's **favorable report for HB345**.

All the Best,

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive