



HB0345 - SUPPORT

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Solar United Neighbors Action

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**HB0345 -
Solar Energy Generating Systems and Solar Renewable Energy Credits
(Affordable Solar Act)**

Environment and Transportation

February 10th, 2025

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

On behalf of my organization, Solar United Neighbors Action (SUN Action), I urge a favorable report on HB0345, Solar Energy Generating Systems and Solar Renewable Energy Credits (Affordable Solar Act). HB0345 puts Maryland on a path towards a reliable, clean, and affordable energy future. SUN Action is a 501(c)4 non-profit organization that represents the needs and interests of solar owners and supporters in Maryland and across the country. Together with our 501(c)3 affiliate Solar United Neighbors (SUN), we help people go solar, join together, and fight for their energy rights. SUN is dedicated to creating a clean, equitable, resilient energy system that benefits everyone. SUN has helped more than 1,925 Marylanders add 17 MW of solar to their homes and businesses and represents forty five thousand solar owners and supporters across the state. These comments are on behalf of SUN Action.

The unchecked growth of power hungry data centers across the region are forcing Marylanders to weather skyrocketing electricity bills, up 40% in the past five years, and potential rolling blackouts as soon as next year. Electric capacity auctions have cleared at record-high prices for the second year in a row.¹ The Affordable Solar Act offers Marylanders much needed relief by ensuring long term stability for ongoing solar deployment and removing outdated regulatory measures that prevent many residents from harnessing the power of the sun.

Many of our neighbors in the region and further down south are scrambling to meet surging power demand by fast-tracking the build out of dirty, expensive, and unreliable gas power plants. This locks in decades of greenhouse gas emissions and subjects our most vulnerable residents to toxic air pollutants, perpetuating long legacies of environmental injustice and undoing our ongoing attempts to build a more equitable and clean energy system. Gas power plants are also ill suited to withstand increasingly intense weather events, often leaving residents powerless during the coldest winter storms.

¹ Maryland Matters, "Energy bills likely to tick up again in 2026 after electricity auction clears at maximum price," (July 2025)

<https://marylandmatters.org/2025/07/23/energy-bills-likely-to-tick-up-again-in-2026-after-electricity-auction-clears-at-maximum-price/>

Marylanders need common sense, community-oriented energy solutions that prioritize the needs of ratepayers over the profits of data center developers and utility companies. Solar, especially on rooftop and community solar, is a cost effective, resilient, and clean energy resource that can meet our energy needs without sacrificing our health, climate goals², or grid stability. Distributed solar in particular, when compared to traditional utility scale resources, can also more easily improve energy equity by localizing and concentrating the above benefits in the communities that need them the most— like low income and overburdened communities with high energy burdens, less access to modern energy infrastructure, and disproportionate exposure to pollution.

Solar United Neighbors' latest report³ with Current Energy Group dives into the value of distributed energy resources (DERs), like distributed solar, to Virginia's residents and energy system. It finds that by 2028, an achievable expansion of DERs would provide the same capacity as a new 950 MW gas plant, but cost \$288+ million less per year, saving the average Virginian family \$90 dollars per year. Maryland could start seeing similar savings if it passes bills like the Affordable Solar Act and other pieces of legislation that deploy more DERs instead of fossil fuels.

The Affordable Solar Act has a two pronged approach to ensuring more Maryland residents can enjoy the many benefits of solar energy without increasing utility bills:

1. The bill will reform Maryland's Solar Renewable Energy Credit Program to ensure rooftop and community solar receive the appropriate incentive prices and to mandate the PSC to conduct competitive procurements for utility-scale solar. It also creates an escrow account system that ensures transparency and prevents utilities from passing excessive costs to customers. These changes will keep costs low, ensure that no industry sector receives more incentives than necessary, and make sure that utility compliance fees actually go towards building out more solar.
2. The bill will also remove outdated interconnection and permitting requirements for small, plug-in solar systems so that more Marylanders, particularly low income residents and renters, have the energy freedom to go solar. A typical plug-in solar system can reduce apartment electricity bills by 10-30%.⁴ Current requirements can cost hundreds of dollars and are designed for rooftop solar installations, not smaller household appliances like plug-in solar. Removing this red tape can help every household get immediate relief from surging energy bills.

² We need to meet our goal of 50% renewable energy by 2030. Maryland Public Service Commission, "Renewable Energy - Electricity," referencing the Clean Energy Jobs Act of 2019 establishing the 50% renewable energy requirement by 2030

<https://www.psc.state.md.us/regulated-utilities/electricity/renewable-energy/>.

³ Current Energy Group, "Value of Distributed Energy Resources in Virginia An Assessment of Benefits and Cost-Effectiveness Prepared for Solar United Neighbors," (January 2026)

https://solarunitedneighbors.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/FINAL_VA_SUN-CEG_2026JAN09.pdf.

⁴ Solar Tech Online, "Solar Panels For Apartment Balconies: Complete 2025 Installation Guide," (August 2025) <https://solartechonline.com/blog/solar-panels-apartment-balcony-guide/>



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

Thank you for your consideration.