SOLAR UNITED NEIGHBORS ACTION

HB1104 - SUPPORT
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HB1104 -
Residential Solar Energy Systems - Local Inspections and Permitting

Environment and Transportation
February 27th, 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 HB1104, Residential Solar Energy Systems - Local Inspections and Permitting. **HB1104 increases access to transformative local, clean energy solutions by cutting red tape, lowering installation costs, and making solar and storage resources cheaper and easier to deploy, regardless of zip code.**

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] Many families are looking to rooftop solar and battery storage to lower their electric bills, increase energy independence, and protect themselves from extreme weather. However, outdated and inconsistent permitting processes are standing in the way. **Today, permitting complexities and delays can add thousands of dollars to the cost of a typical solar installation — in some cases as much as $7,000. These unnecessary costs put solar out of reach for too many Maryland families.**

Maryland is in dire need of new in state energy generation as we import about 40% of our power and consume more electricity than we produce. But many of our neighbors in the

[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/

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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.

Marylanders need common sense, community-oriented energy solutions, like solar and storage, 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 goals[2], or grid stability. Rooftop solar and home batteries also add in state energy generation without additional land use.

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 report[3] with Current Energy Group dives into the value of distributed energy resources (DERs), like distributed solar and storage, 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 HB1104, which removes the barriers to solar deployment at a time when federal incentives are phasing out.**

HB 1104 would:

- Ensure instant online permitting for code-compliant rooftop solar and batteries
- Allow certified installers to "pull the meter" statewide, eliminating unnecessary utility coordination delays
- Allow remote inspections to reduce wait times and costs
- Establish reasonable permitting fees
- Implement a statewide uniform building code to simplify and standardize the installation process

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[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.

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House Bill 1104 is a practical, consumer-focused solution that lowers costs, increases energy resilience, and supports clean, local power.

I respectfully urge you to vote in favor of HB 1104.

Thank you for your consideration!