



Maryland Farm Bureau

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February 10, 2026

To: House Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

RE: **Support of HB460 Solar Energy - Construction of Generating Stations in Priority Preservation Areas and Study**

On behalf of the over 7,000 member families of the Maryland Farm Bureau, I submit this written testimony in support of HB460 – Solar Energy: Construction of Generating Stations in Priority Preservation Areas and Study.

This legislation would reduce, from 5% to 2%, the amount of acreage within Priority Preservation Areas (PPAs) that may be used for the construction of certain solar energy generating stations. It would also require the Maryland Department of the Environment to study the environmental impacts associated with the disposal of solar photovoltaic systems.

Maryland's agricultural land is a finite and irreplaceable resource. Once productive farmland is converted to non-agricultural uses, it is effectively lost forever. PPAs were created precisely to protect our highest-value farming regions, and the current 5% allowance for utility-scale solar development threatens to undermine the long-term viability of these areas.

Statewide, 5% of PPA acreage equates to roughly 106,000 acres. A 2% cap, approximately 43,000 acres, still provides meaningful opportunity for renewable energy deployment while significantly reducing pressure on our most valuable agricultural lands.

Importantly, the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) has publicly stated that Maryland needs approximately 35,000 acres of solar statewide to meet its Renewable Portfolio Standard for solar generation. This means that a 2% cap on PPAs aligns far more closely with actual statewide needs, while a 5% cap greatly exceeds them and invites unnecessary displacement of productive farmland.

Maryland Farm Bureau strongly supports renewable energy development, including solar, when appropriately located. However, protecting agricultural land, especially within PPAs, must remain a top priority for maintaining local food production, supporting rural economies, and preserving Maryland's agricultural heritage.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a favorable report on HB460.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tyler Hough', written over a horizontal line.

Tyler Hough
Director of Government Relations

Please contact Tyler Hough, though@marylandfb.org, with any questions