



Maryland Energy Administration

TO: Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and Members of the Environment & Transportation Committee
FROM: MEA
SUBJECT: HB 1104 - Residential Solar Energy Systems - Local Inspections and Permitting
DATE: March 3, 2026

MEA Position: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENT

The Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) appreciates the long-standing leadership and consistent effort of the bill sponsor in advancing clean energy policies.

HB 1104 would extend the deadline by which authority-having jurisdiction would have to implement “solar permitting software”, and give the Attorney General authorization to enforce this requirement.

Solar permitting software was first required by the Brighter Tomorrow Act of 2024 with an implementation deadline of August 1, 2025. However, adoption has still been limited. This despite the fact that MEA has offered funding for FY25 and FY26 to assist counties and municipalities in adopting and implementing SolarAPP+. SolarAPP+ is a *free*, web-based platform that automates the plan review and permitting process for residential rooftop solar and storage systems. Developed in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Energy and industry experts, it allows local governments to approve compliant, safe projects through an online system, reducing permitting time significantly.

Without SolarAPP+, obtaining permits to install solar can take days, weeks, or even months, and it can be a complex and costly process. SolarAPP+ cuts permit processing time to less than one hour, all while maintaining quality and safety. This can accelerate solar energy deployment and bolster solar businesses across the state by reducing the time and complexity of solar permitting, and also by lowering costs. Additionally, with SolarAPP+, local governments can ease their administrative burden and costs.

Since cost of the solar permitting software is not a barrier, and enticement for implementation through grants has been less than fully effective, MEA must conclude that lack of willingness is a hurdle that is preventing the widespread adoption of SolarAPP+ or other solar permitting software. Therefore, MEA is seeking an amendment to alter the language that *requires* MEA to delay the implementation or suspend the requirement for local authority-having jurisdictions to adopt solar permitting software if state or federal funds are not available to support a county or municipality that is implementing solar permitting software. Instead this should be permissive language that permits MEA to make a

determination not only based on funding, but the willingness and ability of local authority-having jurisdictions to comply.

MEA urges the committee to issue a **favorable report with the recommended amendment** below.

Our sincere thanks for your consideration of this testimony. For questions or additional information, please contact Landon Fahrig, Legislative Liaison at landon.fahrig@maryland.gov or 410.913.1537.

Amendment No. 1

On page 4, in line 13, strike “shall” and substitute “**MAY**”.