



**The Maryland Department of the Environment
Secretary Serena McIlwain**

House Bill 460

Solar Energy - Construction of Generating Stations in Priority Preservation Areas and Study

Position: Information
Committee: Environment and Transportation
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From: Jeremy D. Baker, Director of Government Relations

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) offers the following letter of **INFORMATION** for HB 460.

Bill Summary

House Bill 460 reduces the maximum amount of land within priority preservation areas that can be utilized for solar energy generating stations from 5% to 2% of the total acreage. The bill also mandates that MDE conduct a comprehensive study on the environmental impacts of disposing of solar photovoltaic systems at the end of their life cycles.

Key Points

Maryland is a national leader in land conservation, boasting some of the most successful agricultural preservation programs in the country, such as the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF). These initiatives are vital for protecting the State's rural heritage and ensuring long-term food security. However, this mission creates a complex balancing act as the State simultaneously pushes for rapid solar deployment to lower energy costs and reach aggressive greenhouse gas reduction targets.

MDE believes that the primary objectives of the required study in HB 460 have already been met by the "Circular Economy Approach to Solar Photovoltaics in Maryland" report. This study, authored by the Center for Global Sustainability and Johns Hopkins University, satisfied the primary mandate of the Climate Solutions Now Act and remains available on the MDE website for public review.

MDE hopes that this information is helpful and is available for questions related to HB 460.

Contact: Jeremy D. Baker, Director of Government Relations
Cell: 443-931-0937, Email: jeremy.baker@maryland.gov