



Maryland

Energy Administration

TO: Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee
FROM: MEA
SUBJECT: SB344 - Property Tax - Agricultural Use Assessment - Community Solar Energy
Generating Systems
DATE: March 31, 2026

MEA Position: FAVORABLE

The Maryland Energy Administration respectfully submits this letter of support for Senate Bill 344.

SB 344 extends the approval deadline for certain community solar energy generating systems to qualify for the agricultural use assessment, ensuring that land used for community solar projects continues to receive appropriate property tax treatment through the life cycle of the project. By adjusting the Public Service Commission approval deadline from December 31, 2025 to December 31, 2030, the bill provides necessary regulatory certainty for landowners, developers, and rural communities.

Community solar projects designed for agrivoltaic use allow agricultural production and energy generation to occur simultaneously on the same land. These dual-use systems preserve agricultural activity, maintain soil productivity, and provide farmers with a stable, diversified revenue stream. SB 344 reinforces Maryland's commitment to supporting working lands while advancing clean energy deployment.

The agricultural use assessment plays an important role in protecting farmland from conversion pressures and ensuring that agricultural land remains economically viable. Without the extension provided in SB 344, otherwise qualifying agrivoltaic projects could lose access to this assessment due solely to timing constraints, creating financial uncertainty for landowners who seek to participate in community solar programs.

Community solar expands access to clean energy for households that may not have the ability to install rooftop solar, including renters and low- to moderate-income customers. Supporting agrivoltaic community solar projects strengthens rural economic resilience, promotes local investment, and helps Maryland meet its clean energy and climate goals without displacing active agricultural operations.

MEA urges the committee to issue a **favorable report**.

Our sincere thanks for your consideration of this testimony. For questions or additional information, please contact Megan Outten, Policy manager, at megan.outten@maryland.gov or 443.842.1780.