
ROBERT G. CASSILY
Harford County Executive



ROBERT S. McCORD
Director of Administration

February 12, 2026

The Honorable Jheanelle K. Wilkins
Chair, House Ways and Means Committee
130 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Letter of Opposition on HB 734 – “Property Tax - Agricultural Use Assessment - Community Solar Energy Generating Systems”

Dear Madame Chair and Committee Members,

On behalf of Harford County, I respectfully submit this letter in opposition to House Bill 734.

Counties across Maryland strongly support renewable energy and have worked constructively with the State to advance solar generation in appropriate locations. However, HB 734 is unnecessary and creates unintended consequences that undermine local agricultural preservation and land-use planning efforts.

By extending the deadline for community solar energy generating systems to qualify for agricultural use property tax assessments, the bill further increases the financial incentive to convert active or preserved farmland into energy development sites. This preferential tax treatment makes agricultural land more attractive for non-agricultural development and places additional pressure on farmland that counties are actively working to preserve.

Counties already have tools in place to balance renewable energy development with agricultural protection through zoning and comprehensive planning. Extending agricultural tax benefits for solar projects is not needed to advance renewable energy goals and instead shifts development economics in a way that competes directly with farming and long-term agricultural viability.

For these reasons, the County believes HB 734 is unnecessary and counterproductive. We respectfully urge the Committee to oppose the bill and allow counties to continue managing renewable energy development in a manner that aligns with local agricultural preservation goals and fiscal responsibilities.

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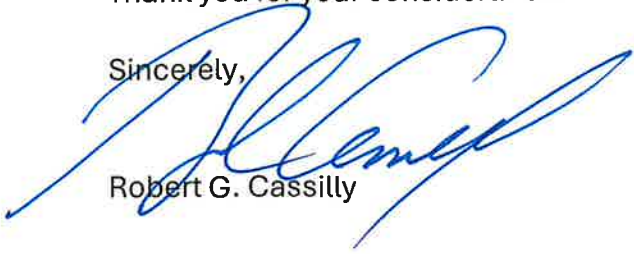
The Honorable Jheanelle K. Wilkins

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Page 2

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Cassilly", is written over the word "Sincerely,". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Robert G. Cassilly