

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 741  
Senate Finance Committee | February 25, 2020**

**Steven Hershkowitz, CCAN Action Fund Maryland Director**

The Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN) Action Fund supports Senate Bill 741, legislation to remove unnecessary barriers for solar projects in the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) process. We thank Sen. Brian Feldman for sponsoring this legislation to help the Public Service Commission (PSC) meet solar requirements in the Clean Energy Jobs Act.

CCAN Action Fund and our grassroots network throughout Maryland is dedicated to achieving a net zero greenhouse gas emission economy by 2045, as is recommended by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). To create this future, we must invest in frontline and historically disadvantaged communities, protect workers, create good-paying union jobs, and result in greater wealth and income equality.

Not only does our electricity sector make up about 30% of the state's climate pollution, but it is the key to reducing emissions in the other two large sources of greenhouse gases: transportation and buildings. Climate scientists have championed the concept of "electrify everything" as a way to eliminate the use of fossil fuels to power our cars and heat our buildings. But "electrify everything" is dependent on a zero emissions electricity grid.

The General Assembly took a huge step forward when it passed the Clean Energy Jobs Act last year, requiring 50% clean electricity by 2030, including a 14.5% "carve out" for solar energy. Unfortunately, red tape in the CPCN process is making it difficult for several solar projects to gain permitting approval without delay costs. For example, the Power Plant Research Program, the state entity responsible for advising the PSC on the environmental impact of new power plants, has been withholding recommendations and stalling the process. This legislation makes it clear that PPRP must provide environmental review and draft permitting conditions for all cases.

The bill does not change state law that requires the PSC to consider consistency with local zoning, as well as efforts of the CPCN applicant to address local concerns. The PSC must give "significant weight" to the recommendation of the local jurisdiction. For these reasons, SB 741 strikes the right balance between clean energy needs and local control. CCAN Action Fund urges a favorable report.

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