



**Before the General Assembly of the State of Maryland
House Economic Matters Committee
January 21, 2021**

**Testimony of David W. Murray
Executive Director
Chesapeake Solar & Storage Association
HB 298: Utility Regulation - Consideration of Climate and Labor
FAVORABLE**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 298. My name is David Murray and I serve as Executive Director of the Chesapeake Solar & Storage Association, formerly known as the Maryland-DC-Virginia Solar Energy Industries Association. We are the local trade association representing over 4,500 solar installers, developers, manufacturers, and other solar workers in Maryland. Our members also provide energy storage solutions to households, businesses, public facilities and utilities – contributing to the state’s efforts to develop a reliable and resilient electric grid.

HB 298 ensures that climate change and labor standards are considered in a critical permitting process at the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC). The PSC is responsible for approving new electric and gas facilities for the state. Every energy generation facility over two megawatts in size (including solar facilities) must receive a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) from the PSC to become part of Maryland’s energy portfolio. The application process is extremely robust, and includes an examination of impacts on the surrounding community, stormwater management, grid reliability and stability, historic sites, aesthetics, waste disposal, aviation safety, consistency with the local zoning plans, and the economics of the project. However, the Public Service Commission is not required to consider neither the facility’s impact of climate change nor the wages and benefits provided to those constructing and operating it.

Given Maryland’s commitment to addressing climate change and social inequity, it is high time for the Public Service Commission to give due consideration to these factors when authorizing new electric and gas facilities.

Solar power is not only a critical, local solution to the climate crisis, but also our state’s need for more living wage careers. Thus, the Chesapeake Solar & Storage Association strongly supports HB 298 as it places overdue consideration of climate and labor issues in the issuance of a CPCN. By factoring in the forecasted greenhouse gas emissions and other climate impacts of the energy generator, the Public Service Commission is examining critical factors that are central to the public interest of the state. The solar industry welcomes a more thorough examination of its own labor and wage standards, given our commitment to equity and living wages. We expect this process will further help ensure the economic benefits of utility-scale solar facilities are to local Maryland businesses and unions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

David Murray
Executive Director
Chesapeake Solar & Storage Association (CHESSA, formerly MDV-SEIA)