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Committee: House Economic Matters

Testimony on: HB 440 "Electricity - Community Solar Energy Generating Systems - Generating Capacity"

Position: Support

Hearing Date: February 10, 2022

Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and Members of the House Economic Matters committee,

CleanChoice Energy submits this testimony in support of HB 440, introduced by Delegate Clippinger, which will increase the maximum generating capacity of a community solar energy generating system from 2 megawatts to 5 megawatts.

CleanChoice Energy is a mission-driven renewable energy company based in Washington, D.C. As a community solar service provider, we provide support for more than 20 megawatts of community solar projects in Maryland, benefiting over 5,000+ Maryland households annually through community solar subscriptions.

As part of Maryland's Community Solar Pilot Program, these projects enable Maryland residents to save up to 10 percent on their utility bills based on electricity generated by the projects. Additionally, the 39,000 megawatt-hours a year of energy our portfolio is expected to produce is equivalent to offsetting 30 million pounds of coal burned. These projects, located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Dorchester, Howard and Prince George's counties, are also pollinator-friendly solar farms, which support the landowners' habitats and pollinator populations.

As a community solar service provider, CleanChoice Energy supports increasing the project size of community solar facilities in the state's pilot program. Increasing the project size limitation of community solar facilities will allow for improved economies of scale. Through the development process, there is a cost of entry to initiate a project regardless of its capacity size. Increasing the capacity allowed for a specific project, will translate to a higher production of the system, which will reduce the unit cost of the overall project and support investment decisions to remain in the Maryland market. It will also reduce the need for the quantity of projects allowable in the program, thereby reducing the strain on available land and site origination practices.

This minor change to the community solar program will allow more efficient development in Maryland, which will aid the state in reaching its clean energy goals on a much quicker timeline.

We urge you to support HB 440.

Sincerely,

Rachel Smucker
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