



HB1261 – Community Solar Energy Generating Systems Pilot Program - Alterations

Testimony before

House Economic Matters Committee

March 10, 2022

Position: Favorable

Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Richard Deutschmann, and I represent the 750+ members of Indivisible Howard County. We are providing written testimony today in support of HB1261, to eliminate the service territory requirement for community solar projects in the state. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We appreciate the leadership of Delegate Queen for sponsoring this important legislation.

Community Solar has been a very successful program here in Maryland, as it has been in numerous states across the country. According to the Solar Energy Industries Association, there are now more than 3,600MW of Community Solar projects operating in the United States, as of 3Q21. It fills a gap for subscribers to be able to utilize the benefits of solar energy, even if they cannot use onsite solar because of lack of home ownership, economic status, or configuration issues such as shaded property. Community Solar helps the state to realize its goal of bringing 1000's of MW of clean energy online, as we reduce our use of fossil fuels to lower greenhouse gas emissions. Finally, Community Solar has the potential to reach 1000's of low to moderate income (LMI) subscribers, with savings on energy bills that will help those who need it most.

However, Community Solar is currently limited, such that customers can only sign up for subscriptions to projects that are located within the same service territory as the customer. This creates a smaller marketplace with fewer options for customers, and thus, higher prices to the end consumer. HB1261 will open up the state for locating projects where it best makes sense, and creating a statewide market for the energy offtake of that project. This in turn will create more choices for consumers, which will further drive an advanced, community solar sector in Maryland.

For these reasons, we support the goals of HB1261, as critical in building a strong Community Solar market in Maryland. Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable committee report.

Richard Deutschmann
Columbia, MD 21045