
February 29, 2024

The Honorable C.T. Wilson
Chair, House Economic Matters Committee
231 House Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 1328 – Solar Energy and Energy Storage - Development and State Procurement

Dear Chair Wilson and Committee members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) offers the following information on House Bill 1328 for the Committee's consideration.

As drafted, House Bill 1328 creates the Utility-Scale Solar Design and Siting Advisory Commission in the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Power Plant Research Program. The Commission must advise the Governor and General Assembly on numerous items including setback ranges, screening requirements, and balancing competing goals related to solar energy, as well as establish a model policy for the development of solar energy generating stations in each county, methods for local prioritization of solar, and decommissioning standards for solar generating stations. House Bill 1328 also establishes requirements for planting and maintaining cover crops for soil generation on the land where the solar station resides. Finally, the bill mandates requirements for the state to procure a certain amount of solar energy each year, establishes a process for selling energy or renewable energy credits, and requires MEA to analyze state land and develop a database to recommend state lands for solar energy development.

MDOT is actively investigating how it may leverage appropriate existing MDOT property to generate solar energy. It should be noted that some MDOT property, such as State Highway Administration right of way, has encumbrances that would prevent it from being utilized as space for solar projects. In some cases, property was purchased with federal funds, which places certain restrictions on how the property may be used and how it may be disposed of. Given the complex nature of the property that MDOT owns and projects that MDOT does, we would request that the sponsor include the Department on the Utility-Scale Solar Design and Siting Advisory Commission.

The Maryland Department of Transportation looks forward to further collaboration with the sponsor and respectfully requests the Committee consider this information during its deliberations of House Bill 1328.

Respectfully submitted,

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