



**House Bill 1328**

*Solar Energy and Energy Storage - Development and State Procurement*

Position: **FAV**

Date: **February 27, 2024**

To: **Economic Matters and  
Appropriations**

The Caroline County Commissioners **SUPPORT** HB 1328. This bill seeks to address critical issues related to solar energy development and land conservation in Caroline County. While the Commissioners recognize the importance of expanding renewable energy sources like solar power, it is imperative that we also consider the unique needs and challenges of agricultural and rural communities like ours on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

Caroline County is home to a vibrant farming and agriculture industry that plays a vital role in our local economy and way of life. As such, any legislation pertaining to solar energy development must take into account the impact on agricultural land and the preservation of our rural landscapes.

House Bill 1328 includes provisions that allow counties to enact local laws creating conservation and restoration funds, particularly for areas zoned for agricultural or silvicultural use. This is a crucial step in ensuring that solar energy development is conducted responsibly and in harmony with our agricultural heritage. By requiring developers of solar generating stations to contribute to these funds, we can mitigate the impact on agricultural land and support conservation efforts in our community.

Additionally, we commend the requirement for the owner or operator of a ground-mounted solar energy generating station to plant and maintain a cover crop beneficial to soil health and submit a vegetation management plan. These measures are essential for protecting the integrity of our agricultural land and preserving our natural resources for future generations. The Commissioners respectfully urge your committee to issue a favorable report on HB 1328. By enacting thoughtful legislation that considers the needs of rural communities, we can ensure a sustainable future for Caroline County and the state of Maryland as a whole.

Sincerely,

J. Travis Breeding, President