



## House Bill 936

### *Blue Ribbon Community Solar Land Use Commission*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**  
**WITH AMENDMENTS**

To: Environment and Transportation and  
Economic Matters Committees

Date: March 2, 2022

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 936 **WITH AMENDMENTS**. The bill would establish a blue ribbon commission to study how best to meet the full power generation capacity authorized under ambitious state laws. MACo seeks amendments that would broaden the representation on the commission to ensure a comprehensive and diverse consideration of regional needs.

Solar represents one of the most promising sources of clean and renewable energy. During this legislative session alone, several major environmental and climate-response bills have come forward, where expanded solar is envisioned as a component in helping to reduce emissions and meet clean energy goals. Counties recognize the importance of solar and believe in its wide deployment as part of a forward-looking land use and energy strategy. However, questions remain about the implications of widespread adoption and which policy tools will best promote its continued implementation.

As such, it is critical to have the fullest understanding of the implications of a broad rollout of solar. Counties, therefore, ask that the following points guide amendments to HB 936:

- County representation should be expanded to fully cover the diversity of Maryland's various environments and landscapes. Therefore, MACo proposes that the commission allocates two seats (one elected official and one county professional practitioner in land use or environmental policy) from each of four regions to reflect the breadth of implementation diversity. Ensuring the commission is sensitive to the range of issues from the western piedmont, to the developed urbanized areas, to the prime agricultural tiers will benefit its deliberations and credibility.
- The commission should be expanded to study all aspects of a broad solar rollout. Instead of committing to piecemeal solar policy development, counties believe it would be more efficient to establish one central body to look into the issue and develop recommendations regarding not only capacity, but also tax benefits, land renewal incentives, clean energy sourced on landfill properties, and the like.

HB 936 is a suitable next step in developing Maryland's long-term solar strategy. The proposed commission should be broadened both in diversity and scope to best develop the most coordinated and comprehensive vision for the future. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report for HB 936.