



Senate Bill 683

*Public Utilities - Solar Energy Generating Stations - Siting
(Solar Siting and Preservation Credit Act of 2026)*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment
Committee

Date: February 26, 2026

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 683. This bill would clarify that solar projects located on certain sites within a Priority Preservation Area (PPA) count toward the five percent ground-mounted solar cap established under the Renewable Energy Certainty Act of 2025 (RECA).

The 2025 session will go down in history as the “Session of Energy,” with an unprecedented number of bills debated and enacted to address reliability and reduce utility costs. One of the most consequential measures was the Renewable Energy Certainty Act (RECA), which sought to provide clearer guardrails for project siting, affirm local roles in the siting process, and support responsible growth of ground-mounted solar across the state. A central component of that balance—particularly for rural communities—was a safeguard to prevent unchecked solar development from displacing Maryland’s most productive agricultural land. Under RECA, counties may limit additional solar development once five percent of a county’s PPA acreage has been utilized for solar.

Statewide, five percent of PPAs equates to just under 120,000 acres of prime agricultural land potentially converted to solar development. Once converted, that land is typically removed from agricultural production for decades, if not longer. By ensuring that solar developed on brownfields, school rooftops, and other underutilized sites counts toward the five percent threshold, SB 683 offers a practical, commonsense clarification that helps balance two important—and sometimes competing—State goals: expanding renewable energy while protecting working farmland.

Counties remain committed to being constructive partners in meeting Maryland’s energy needs. Accordingly, MACo respectfully urges a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 683.