

DAVID S. LAPP
PEOPLE'S COUNSEL

WILLIAM F. FIELDS
DEPUTY PEOPLE'S COUNSEL

JULIANA BELL
DEPUTY PEOPLE'S COUNSEL

— OPC —
OFFICE OF PEOPLE'S COUNSEL
State of Maryland

6 ST. PAUL STREET, SUITE 2102
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21202
WWW.OPC.MARYLAND.GOV

BRANDI NIELAND
DIRECTOR, CONSUMER
ASSISTANCE UNIT

BILL NO.: Senate Bill 469
Task Force to Study Solar Tax Incentives

COMMITTEE: Budget & Taxation

HEARING DATE: February 21, 2023

SPONSOR: Senators Elfreth & Guzzone

POSITION: Favorable with Amendment

The Office of People’s Counsel (OPC) supports Senate Bill 469 with an amendment. SB 469 will create a broad-based task force of government and private entities to analyze and make recommendations to the General Assembly on the use of tax incentives to facilitate and promote the installation of grid connected renewable energy projects. The development of more renewable energy projects will assist the State in meeting the goals of the Renewable Portfolio Standard and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Encouraging renewable energy developers to locate projects—particularly utility scale solar projects—on less productive land, such as rooftops, brownfields, and abandoned mining sites, is an important way to avoid conflicts between the expansion of solar projects, on the one hand, and the preservation of natural resources and removal of highly productive land from agricultural uses, on the other, ultimately allowing for the siting of more solar projects. A number of other states have adopted tax strategies to incentivize the location of solar projects, and OPC supports the development of such incentives here in Maryland.

OPC respectfully requests that the Budget and Taxation Committee consider an amendment adding the People’s Counsel or the People’s Counsel’s designee as a member of the Task Force. OPC represents the interests of residential customers in Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) proceedings before the Public Service Commission. OPC also has an interest in the expanded development of renewable energy

projects to increase the availability of those sources for electricity generation in the State. As such, we are well-positioned to assist the Task Force in its important work seeking to maximize the potential for solar development and to meet the State's renewable energy goals. This addition would also be consistent with the bill's inclusion of the State's other energy policy agencies, the Public Service Commission and the Maryland Energy Administration.

Recommendation: OPC requests a favorable report with an amendment for SB 469.