



Senate Bill 592

State-Funded Construction and Major Renovation Projects – Solar Panels - Requirement

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Education, Health, and Environmental
Affairs Committee

Date: February 19, 2020

From: Drew Jabin

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** SB 592. This bill would place a costly mandate on county governments to carry out new state policy to place the maximum number of solar panels on a roof as specified during new construction or major renovation projects.

As a rule, MACo resists state policies that result in costly or burdensome local implementation. SB 592 would implement a costly, difficult mandate for county governments to design, engineer, and construct future buildings to withstand the weight of the maximum efficient number of solar panels. Under this proposed law, counties would have no choice but to adhere to the policy, irrespective of the viability of efficiency of this energy option.

Another route to pursue similar outcomes, which counties would not oppose, would be to create a mandator *consideration* for state-funded projects. If part of the state's facility approval process included a checklist that the facility has been considered as a candidate for certain potentially desirable inclusions (including, in this case, energy-efficient facilities like solar or geothermal) – counties would accede to this standard to promote these worthy goals.

This bill, as written, represents a significant unfunded mandate for county governments, and may force inefficient or poorly-suited facility expansions. Counties agree that studying renewable energy sources is important in understanding what is the most efficient, reasonable option for each site, but this legislation goes too far in mandating one standard to all projects. For these reasons, MACo **OPPOSES** SB 592 and urges an **UNFAVORABLE** report.