



## Senate Bill 603

### *Electricity – Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards - Sources*

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

Date: March 6, 2018

To: Finance Committee

From: Leslie Knapp, Jr.

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** SB 603. The bill requires that in any year where the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS) Tier 1 renewable source percentage exceeds 25%, at least 51% of the renewable energy credits (RECs) required must be from an energy source located in Maryland.

MACo recognizes the value and benefits that renewable energy brings to Maryland. However, MACo has testified in the past that careful consideration needs to be given to the amount of land, especially prime farmland and open space, that can be lost if renewable energy sources must be located in Maryland to satisfy all or part of the RPS. One of MACo's 2017 Legislative Initiatives, which passed as HB 1350, directly addressed this issue.

MACo is supportive of the underlying intent of the bill – that no one region in the state be unfairly burdened into becoming an energy producer for the rest of the state. For example, MACo's position on solar energy stresses the need for a combination of rooftop, community, and utility-scale projects with priority consideration for brownfield or greyfield locations over prime agricultural lands or open space. Any such policies must have multiple components to address why there is demand for locating renewable energy sites in rural areas of the state.

However, the provisions of SB 603 do not address the existing forces that are driving renewable energy projects to the more rural areas of the state and simply requiring an REC mandate without other components to address those forces could actually exacerbate additional development in rural areas.

SB 603 is a well-intentioned bill that could unintentionally amplify the very concern it seeks to address. Accordingly, MACo requests the Committee give SB 603 an **UNFAVORABLE** report.