

Electricity - Community Energy Generating Facilities – Pilot **SB-0699 and HB-1128**

Creating Equitable Opportunities in Maryland's Renewable Energy Economy

Are you interested in using sunshine to produce electricity for your home, but your roof is too shaded or faces the wrong direction? Or do you live in an apartment or condominium where you cannot install solar panels on the roof?

The answer to these problems is to join with other folks in your area to produce clean electricity through a 'community energy generating facility' (or CEGF). Such a facility would enable groups of citizens to 'subscribe' and thereby jointly own renewable energy facilities, producing clean power at sites near but not on their own house, and offering a credit on each subscribers' monthly electric bill. These models are now being developed and implemented in many other states and communities across the United States.



However, here in Maryland there are some legal roadblocks to starting a CEGF. Help is on the way, as Senator Paul Pinsky and Delegate Dana Stein have recently introduced legislation (SB-0699 and HB-1128) that will allow Marylanders to create and operate CEGFs. Last year an effort to pass a similar bill was not successful. Careful study of last year's experience led to the drafting of a new bill. This year's bill proposes a three-year pilot program that will allow the development of a limited number of CEGFs and provides for the careful study of these initial Maryland systems. The hope is that the study resulting from this pilot program will lead to future legislation allowing more community energy generating facilities across Maryland. You can find the full text of SB-0699 and HB-1128 at <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/>

These bills include a variety of renewable energy technologies: solar, wind, biomass, fuel cell or closed conduit hydro.

What will the Electricity - Community Energy Generating Facilities - Pilot achieve?

Building on Maryland's existing renewable energy policies and programs, this Act creates opportunities for Maryland residents to benefit from renewable energy, who are unable to install at their own home or business. It 'levels the playing field' of renewable energy for large segments of Maryland citizens. Considering that everyone who pays an electric bill helps to support renewable energy programs, the Act recognizes that it is imperative that opportunities exist for everyone to invest and participate in the renewable energy economy. A CEGF program in Maryland will also create more local jobs, as community renewable projects are designed, constructed, operated and maintained in the coming years.

Your help is needed to get these bills approved by the state legislature and signed by Governor O'Malley. Here is how you can help:

- Write or call your state senator and state representatives, tell them that you support SB-0699 and HB-1128, and ask them to support these bills. You can find contact information for your state senator and state representatives at <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/> This is especially important if your state senator and state representatives are on the Finance Committee or Economic Matters Committee, as the bills will be considered there first.
- Keep informed on the progress of these bills by signing up for email alerts through the MD-SUN discussion group at <http://tinyurl.com/MDSUNSignUp>
- **For more info, contact** David Brosch, davidcbrosch@comcast.net, 301-779-3168 or David O'Leary at 301-580-8673