



Montgomery County Group

April 10, 2018

Testimony on

Bill 12-18 – Real Property – New Home Sales Contract – Solar Systems

Good afternoon. My name is Stephanie Riddick and I am testifying on behalf of the Montgomery Group of the Sierra Club and its more than 6,000 members in this county.

We appreciate the effort of Councilmember Marc Elrich to introduce this bill and also express gratitude to Councilmember Tom Hucker as co-sponsor to offer the opportunity to expand clean energy use and installations of solar systems in the county. We are pleased to support the passage of this bill and we include our additional recommendations below.

The bill properly includes the requirement that all prospective buyers of new homes be offered the opportunity to purchase a solar system as a part of the sales contract. Like other amenities on a home, the purchaser should have the option of choosing which type of energy their home will use. This bill will give buyers the option of choosing clean renewable energy as an initial option, instead of only as a retro-fit, years into the future.

In this way, the home can be designed from the beginning with the solar system as a part of the design process. This will ensure that the solar system most closely fits the home's design and structure. For many, the option to include the cost of a solar system in the initial purchase of the home may be more financially feasible than an out-of-pocket purchase of a solar system at a later time.

The Sierra Club recommends that the option of a solar shingle system be included as a possible purchase as such systems are currently available and have been installed in the county. Further, the bill should also require the seller to provide information on the current state and federal tax incentives for solar systems that may offset part of the system's cost.

The option of adding solar to a new home, when chosen, will gradually reduce the use of fossil fuels and other non-clean sources of energy for single-family homes in the county. This bill represents an additional opportunity to create green jobs and to transition to a 100% clean energy economy. This effort will further address the climate emergency the County Council has declared and help further educate the public, home buyers, home sellers and others about the benefits of solar energy.

In closing, we again thank the Council for your efforts to bring clean energy opportunities to our county. We request that this bill be passed as soon as possible and we look forward to our continuing working relationship in building a clean energy future for all county residents.

Stephanie Riddick

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