

# SENATE BILL 683

C5, L1

6lr2633

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By: **Senators Gallion and Jennings**

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2026

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Public Utilities – Solar Energy Generating Stations – Siting**  
3 **(Solar Siting and Preservation Credit Act of 2026)**

4 FOR the purpose of authorizing a county to credit certain solar energy generating stations  
5 constructed on certain parcels toward the acreage limitation for solar energy  
6 generating stations constructed in priority preservation areas; and generally  
7 relating to solar energy generating stations.

8 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,  
9 Article – Public Utilities  
10 Section 7–218(a)  
11 Annotated Code of Maryland  
12 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

13 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
14 Article – Public Utilities  
15 Section 7–218(h)  
16 Annotated Code of Maryland  
17 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

18 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
19 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

20 **Article – Public Utilities**

21 7–218.

22 (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

23 (2) “Agrivoltaics” has the meaning stated in § 7–306.2 of this title.

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (3) “Brownfields site” has the meaning stated in § 7–207 of this subtitle.

2 (4) “Local jurisdiction” includes counties, municipal corporations, and  
3 other forms of local government.

4 (5) “Priority preservation area” means an area certified as a priority  
5 preservation area under § 2–518 of the Agriculture Article.

6 (6) (i) “Project area” means an area within which construction,  
7 materials and equipment storage, grading, landscaping, and related activities for a project  
8 may occur.

9 (ii) “Project area” includes one or more contiguous parcels or  
10 properties under the same ownership or lease agreement.

11 (h) (1) Except as provided in paragraphs (3) and (4) of this subsection, a local  
12 jurisdiction may not:

13 (i) adopt zoning laws or other laws or regulations that prohibit the  
14 construction or operation of solar energy generating stations; or

15 (ii) deny site development plans for solar energy generating stations  
16 that meet the requirements of subsection (f) of this section.

17 (2) A local jurisdiction shall:

18 (i) expedite the review and approval of site development plans for  
19 solar energy generating stations if those plans meet the requirements of this section; and

20 (ii) for solar energy generating stations with a generating capacity  
21 of not more than 5 megawatts, as measured by the alternating current rating of the solar  
22 energy generating station’s inverter, process the site development plan application as a  
23 permitted use subject to the review standards in § 4–205 of the Land Use Article.

24 (3) A ground mounted solar energy generating station with a generating  
25 capacity of more than 5 megawatts, as measured by the alternating current rating of the  
26 solar energy generating station’s inverter, may not be located on any lot, parcel, or tract of  
27 land that, as of January 1, 2025, is located within:

28 (i) a Tier 1 or Tier 2 mapped locally designated growth area adopted  
29 under § 1–506 of the Land Use Article;

30 (ii) a medium density residential area or high density residential  
31 area, as defined in § 5–1601 of the Natural Resources Article; or

32 (iii) a mixed–use area with a residential component.

1                   (4)   (i)    The total combined number of solar energy generating stations  
2 that may be approved for construction in a priority preservation area that was established  
3 before January 1, 2025, shall:

- 4                                   1.    be limited in area to 5% of the total acreage of the priority  
5 preservation area;
- 6                                   2.    be located in the project area within the priority  
7 preservation area; and
- 8                                   3.    meet all requirements under this section.

9                   (ii)   The prohibitions in paragraph (1) of this subsection do not apply  
10 to the remaining 95% of a priority preservation area once the 5% limitation under  
11 subparagraph (i) of this paragraph has been achieved for the priority preservation area.

12                   (iii)   **A COUNTY MAY CREDIT SOLAR ENERGY GENERATING**  
13 **STATIONS THAT ARE APPROVED AFTER JANUARY 1, 2027, AND ARE LOCATED ON**  
14 **BROWNFIELDS, SCHOOL ROOFTOPS OR FIELDS, OR OTHER UNDERUTILIZED LAND,**  
15 **TOWARD THE 5% LIMITATION IN SUBPARAGRAPH (I) OF THIS PARAGRAPH.**

16                   (IV)   A county shall report to the Commission when the 5% limitation  
17 under subparagraph (i) of this paragraph has been achieved for a priority preservation  
18 area.

19                   SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
20 October 1, 2026.