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For Immediate Release

**Maryland PSC Launches Application Process
for Community Solar Pilot Program
*Action Brings Program Closer to Operation***

(BALTIMORE, MD—March 29, 2017) – With approval today of utility tariffs, the Maryland Public Service Commission will soon begin accepting applications from operators of community solar generating systems to take part in the state’s community solar pilot program. The operators, known as subscriber organizations, could begin enrolling customers as soon as this summer. Beginning **April 10, 2017**, subscriber organizations can apply to the Commission for initial approval to participate in the program.

Applications received between April 10 and May 5, 2017 will be included in the initial group of subscriber organizations to participate in the first year of the program; once approved, a subscriber organization must first apply to a utility for interconnection and then apply for project capacity in that utility’s program. Utilities will accept projects with completed applications on a first-come, first-served basis until each utility’s program capacity has been met. Participating utilities include Baltimore Gas and Electric, Delmarva Power & Light, Potomac Edison and Potomac Electric Power Company.

Subscriber organizations can obtain applications on the Commission’s website (www.psc.state.md.us). The Commission’s subscriber organization application will collect information about the technical and managerial competency of applicants as well as the projects for which they wish to apply. For-profit subscriber organizations or those proposing more than 1MW of project capacity will be required to post a bond.

The three-year community solar pilot program aims to increase the opportunity to invest in or contract for solar generating equipment for all Maryland ratepayers. The program sets aside capacity for offerings to low and moderate income customers. In addition, it will encourage private investment in Maryland’s solar industry and diversify the state’s energy resource mix to meet the state’s Renewable Portfolio Standard and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act goals. Community solar customers are expected to realize some savings on their electric bills and all Marylanders will benefit from more clean energy options.

The community solar pilot program will:

- Provide access to solar-generated electricity – in a manner similar to rooftop solar and net metering – for all Maryland customers without requiring property ownership;
- Incentivize solar companies to provide service to low- and moderate-income customers;
- Set aside program capacity for each area of the state with a statewide cap at about 193MW. **About 60MW is set aside for projects with a significant portion of low and moderate income customers;**
- Attract new investment in Maryland’s renewable infrastructure and green economy;
- Allow renters to contract for solar energy with the same benefits as rooftop owners;
- Create separate program capacity for small systems and systems built on brownfields, parking lots, or industrial areas;
- Allow smaller and rural service territories to make use of existing solar facilities while encouraging construction of new systems in the urban and suburban areas of Maryland;
- Include significant consumer protections, including prohibition against unreasonable fees and clear contract disclosure requirements; and
- Allow the Commission Staff to collect necessary data to study the impact on Maryland’s electricity grid over the three-year pilot program.

The regulations governing the community solar pilot program initiated from legislation (HB 1087) passed in the 2015 Maryland General Assembly session and signed by Governor Larry Hogan, and were considered in a rule making process docketed by the Commission as [RM56](#).

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About the Public Service Commission:

The Maryland Public Service Commission regulates electric and gas utilities, telephone companies (land lines), certain water and sewer companies, passenger motor vehicle carriers for hire (sedans, limousines, buses, Uber, Lyft), taxicab companies (in Baltimore City and County, Cumberland and Hagerstown) and bay pilot rates.

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