



Maryland Lost 800 Solar Jobs in 2018. More Losses Coming in 2019 Without General Assembly Action. Pass the Clean Energy Jobs Act (HB 1158/SB 516).

The Maryland solar industry lost over 800 solar jobs in 2018, shrinking the state workforce to 4,515 people.

The [survey data](#) was released Tuesday by the Solar Foundation, a non-profit organization based in Washington DC. 2018 was the second year in a row Maryland solar jobs declined. The state's solar workforce peaked at over 5,400 people in 2016, according to the study.

Members of the Maryland-DC-Virginia Solar Energy Industries Association (MDV-SEIA) were disappointed but unsurprised. The trade association has been warning lawmakers of impending layoffs since 2017. At the time, solar installations were expected to surpass the demand spurred by the state's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS). The standard stipulates that utilities provide at least 2.5% of electricity from solar power by 2020. Once solar installations began exceeding the target, the local market stagnated. Meanwhile neighboring markets, like New Jersey and the District of Columbia, increased RPS targets and attracted more solar jobs.

David Murray, MDV-SEIA's Executive Director, noted the association tried to curtail layoffs by pushing legislation in 2018 that would have raised Maryland's RPS from 25% by 2020 to 50% by 2030. "Unfortunately, last year's legislation died in committee as lawmakers packed up to campaign. With climate change taking center stage during the 2018 election, we trust the new General Assembly will renew Maryland's leadership in clean energy."

Indeed, local solar companies are back in Annapolis to urge their representatives to once again to pass the 50% RPS increase. The bill, known as the Clean Energy Jobs Act, currently [has a majority of co-sponsors](#) in both chambers of the General Assembly. The bulk of renewable energy growth would derive from in-state solar and offshore wind resources, which is estimated to create approximately 24,000 jobs by 2030. The legislation also provides additional funding for women and minority-owned businesses in the Maryland clean tech sector.

"Losing hundreds of living-wage jobs in Maryland is a tragedy, and it will get worse if the state's RPS is not updated in 2019" said Cyrus Tashakkori, President of Open Road Renewables and Chairman of Maryland's Utility Scale Solar Energy Coalition. "The good news is that there's a real opportunity here for the General Assembly not just to stem the bleeding but also to set the stage for a decade of growth in Maryland's home-grown solar industry, bringing wages, economic investment, and tax revenue to all corners of the state while greening our electric grid."

"Maryland lawmakers have a real opportunity this year to reignite the state's solar industry, which will bring back jobs and economic investment dollars that have recently gone to neighboring, more business-friendly states," said Abigail Ross Hopper, president and CEO of the national Solar Energy Industries Association. "Approving the Clean Energy Jobs Act and boosting the state's RPS will send a strong signal to companies that Maryland is back open for business."

On Tuesday February 19th, thirty solar firms convened in Annapolis to show broad support for the Clean Energy Jobs Act, SB 516 / HB 1158. For more information, please contact David Murray at (202) 780 9563 or director@mdvseia.org.