



House Bill 1407

County Tier 1 Renewable Sources - Generating Systems, Capacity, and Generation - Prohibition, Studies, and Plans

Position: **UNF**

Date: **February 27, 2024**

To: **Economic Matters**

The Caroline County Commissioners **OPPOSE** HB 1407. This bill seeks to regulate renewable energy generating systems and facilities, particularly Tier 1 renewable sources, at the county level. While we recognize the importance of renewable energy and the need to transition towards cleaner sources of power, we believe that the provisions outlined in House Bill 1407 pose significant challenges for local governance and land use planning.

The bill prohibits counties from establishing zoning laws or other regulations that restrict or prohibit the construction or operation of Tier 1 renewable source generating systems or facilities. By imposing such restrictions, the bill undermines the authority of local governments to make decisions that align with the unique characteristics and needs of their communities.

The requirement in HB 1407 for each county to conduct studies on the amount of Tier 1 renewable source generating capacity it could provide and to create a 10-year generation plan places an undue burden on already stretched local resources. These mandates divert attention and resources away from other pressing local priorities and initiatives.

Additionally, the bill's timeline for compliance and oversight plans may not be feasible for many counties, especially those with limited resources and expertise in renewable energy development. This could result in rushed decision-making and inadequate planning, leading to suboptimal outcomes for both the environment and the community.

The Commissioners respectfully urge your committee to issue an unfavorable report on HB 1407. We urge a reconsideration of HB 1407 provisions, and we support working towards a more collaborative and flexible framework that respects the autonomy of local governments and enables them to pursue renewable energy initiatives in a manner that best suits their communities.

Sincerely,

J. Travis Breeding, President