

Contact:

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About the Land & Liberty Coalition

- Maryland / Delaware chapter. A 501c3 non-profit project of **Conservatives for Clean Energy** with chapters in 13 states
- Represented by Adam Dubitsky and [Flywheel Government Solutions](#). Our backgrounds: State, regional & federal gov't relations, Political consulting, corporate communications, P3s, coalitions
- Land & Liberty educates and advocates in support of **Utility Scale Solar and Wind projects, Community Solar, and Transmission/Grid upgrades**
 - From initial awareness through project-specific siting and permitting
- Engagement with local officials, grassroots advocacy, media relations, crisis comms, messaging testimony before locals and the PSC
- **Directly** with developers & vendors in support of projects
 - Collaborate with in-house and external PR, lobbying, legal/regulatory teams
- **General** advocacy of supportive political, grassroots, regulatory environment for projects; favorable zoning, permitting



Why our Focus on Rural Land?

- It's where the land and opportunities are
 - **For farm families that lease:** Stable income for 25-30 yrs
 - No fuel, fertilizer, labor \$ fluctuations, droughts or floods
 - **For farm families that sell:** Fair value for *THEIR* land
 - **For counties and local communities:**
 - More tax revenue than traditional crops w/o the impact of permanent residential/commercial development
 - Solar farms don't have kids, commute to work, take showers, or get arrested. Yet,
 - *They help fund education, roads & sewers, police & fire*



Rural Audiences Require Conservative / Free Market Perspectives

- We're effective because we engage with conservatives as conservatives while working across party lines where possible
 - We respect that others have different beliefs, messages, and approaches, and value our relationships with progressive environmental groups, and the men and women of organized labor
- Landowner / Farmer Rights
 - Allow farmers to decide what to farm – food, feed, fuel, etc.
- Preserving rural and ag land for the next generation
- Local job creation and economic development
- American energy independence
- Science, facts, and data are more helpful than thoughts & feelings in getting clean energy projects built



The Problem: MD Solar is Years Behind

- State & Feds set targets, declare victory, go home, repeat
- The PSC estimates Maryland will need about 6,200 MW of solar to meet current 2030 greenhouse gas reduction goals
- But we're on track for just 1,600 MW by the end of 2023
- That means **575 megawatts of new generation per year**
- But just **210 MW per year** is projected (SEIA)
- And we're not likely to meet even those projections



Why is Renewable Power Reality Unplugged from General Assembly Targets?

- A project started today would take at least 7 years for construction to begin:
- Find and negotiate a cost-effective site to lease or buy that's not too far from an existing power grid "interconnection"
- Submit highly complex interconnection application to PJM, the regional grid operator. Approval can take 2-5 years, however...
 - *Currently, PJM has more megawatts of proposed power generation in their application queue than are being generated in their entire market*
 - *PJM put a pause on new applications and is seeking federal permission for a two-year moratorium on applications while they clear the backlog and fix the system*
- File application for a CPNC w/ Public Service Commission – 3-5 years
 - Requires hearings, sign-off from agencies including MDE, DNR, and even the FAA
- CPNC means construction can begin – 18-36 months until power flows



Why our Focus on Rural Land?

- Why not just industrial, commercial, brownfields, and rooftops?
 - There's not enough and far too expensive even with incentives
 - Rooftops - Important, but panels on every available structure in the state wouldn't be enough and not everyone wants it
 - Community Solar – Also important but even with the all the above, and placed on every feasible site it alone wouldn't meet current targets and requires far more land to scale



Impediments

- Counties are looking for ways to get around PSC preeminence as established by case law.
- County commissions, preservation groups opposed
 - Lawsuits can delay for years
- State/county policy bias in “farming” renewables
 - Zoning & Planning allows growing ethanol, restrict “planting” solar
- Renewable Energy Policy at Odds with Ag Preservation Policy
 - Tax & Restrict Schemes such as using MALPF on current projects to fund preventing solar on other ag lands.



What's in the Way?

- Industry public affairs in-fighting
 - Community and Rooftop pitched as alternative solution to large scale. Again – won't be enough.
- PJM has more in queue than being generated
 - Compounded by two-year pause in new applications to reform interconnection process
- PSC case load, can take years for CPNC orders and that's after the PJM approves the interconnection



Solar Facts vs. Fiction: *Perspective*

“But we like seeing corn fields on the way to our summer home.”

- Urban/Suburban Perspective on Rural Realities
 - Alarming Report⁽²⁾ - **28,200 ACRES OF MD AG LAND MIGHT BE “CONSUMED” BY SOLAR BY 2040!!!**
 - Vs. *“Allowing farmers to use just 1.3 % of Maryland’s 2,000,000 ag acres for solar would help meet GHG goals, benefit local communities, preserve farmland, and restore ecosystems.”*
- **Claim:** Solar will make food insecurity and prices worse
 - Not true. But easy to think if you see new solar farms popping up
- **Claim:** Solar farms hurt neighboring property values
 - No evidence to support this



Solar Fact vs. Fiction: Ecology

- **Claim:** *Solar farms harm the Bay*
 - False. Solar farms don't need tons of fertilizer, pesticides, or millions of gallons of ground water to operate.
- **Claim:** *Reforestation, regenerative Ag better for climate*
 - Not even close: In **tons of CO2** removed per acre per year
Reforest: 2.48, Regen: 1.78. Solar: **196** tons of CO2 per yr.



Solar Fact vs. Fiction: Farmlands

- **Claim:** *Solar Farms destroy farmland*
 - **False.** They allow the soils under the panels to heal, especially when combined with native plant species a/k/a...
- Agrivoltaics – Compared to agricultural use alone, combining solar with native pollinators – has a multiplier effect that also helps nearby farms
 - 65% increase in carbon storage potential
 - 3x increase in pollinator supply
 - 95% reduction in sediment runoff
 - 19% reduction in water runoff
 - Thus – Leaving next generation with more valuable land



What can be done?

- Work together on education and advocacy
- Different Messages & Priorities – Same Goals
- **Blue and Green Voters** – The work doesn't stop once the GA Session ends. Your energy and support is needed at county level for utility-scale projects.
- **Red Voters** - This isn't Nancy Pelosi's Green New Deal. CEJA, IJA, IRA have outsized benefits for conservative areas. Large scale solar = saving farms, stewardship, income and American Energy Independence.

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