



Re: Senate Bill 0931/House Bill 1036

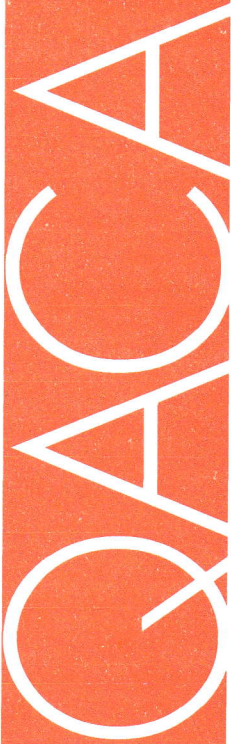
Dear Senators and Delegates,

I write to you on behalf of Queen Anne's Conservation Association (QACA) in opposition to Senate Bill 0931 and House Bill 1036. These bills are the further product of Maryland's ongoing, disastrous mismanagement of the necessary transition from fossil fuels to renewables. For the sake of conservation and agriculture in Maryland, QACA urges their rejection.

SB 0931/HB1036 would require Counties to expedite approval of, and not impose taxes on, any solar energy generating station or energy storage device that meets (laughably minimal) *State* requirements, *regardless* of whether the station or device meets *County* requirements for acceptable uses of agricultural land. The bills thus (1) remove from Maryland Counties their long-established land use authority to require that industrial-scale facilities are sited and operated in reasonable conformity with County land use planning and zoning ordinances enacted for the preservation of agriculture and (2) nullify the long-established taxing authority of Counties to collect personal and real property taxes on industrial projects within their jurisdiction.

The Governor and Legislative leadership of the State of Maryland deliberately excluded Maryland's farming Counties and agricultural communities from the political process that generated SB 0931/HB1036, instead turning this process over to private solar companies and urban County interests having no appreciation of or concern for Maryland agriculture. The result of bad energy policy planning in the past, combined with a flawed political process for developing new solar-related legislation, is proposed legislation that:

- (1) makes no effort to achieve a practical accommodation of solar energy development and Maryland agriculture;
- (2) fails to learn from Maryland Counties, like Queen Anne's County, that have adopted reasonable regulatory regimes that both accommodate utility-scale solar projects and protect agriculture;



- (3) fails to recognize the wide availability of non-farmland sites for solar energy projects, such as airport fields, brownfields, landfills, building rooftops, highway median strips, water bodies;
- (4) authorizes uncontrolled conversion of Maryland farmland to an industrial use, thereby unnecessarily sacrificing a vital sector of Maryland's economy;
- (5) sets in motion negative impacts, not only on farming, but also on woodlands, wildlife, hunting, fishing, recreation, tourism, and other activities economically important to Maryland's rural Counties, especially on the Eastern Shore and in Western Maryland; and
- (6) invites the cynical observation that SB 0931/HB1036 is nothing more than trying to put lipstick on the pig of the long-mismanaged State transition from fossil fuels to renewables.

QACA urges rejection of SB 0931/HB1036 and a fresh start on Maryland solar policy, with all stakeholders on board and without private solar companies steering the boat.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jay Falstad'.

Jay Falstad

Executive Director, QACA

Cc: Sen. Stephen S. Hershey  
Sen. Johnny Mautz  
Del. Christopher T. Adams  
Del. Stephen J. Arentz  
Del. Jefferson L. Ghrist  
Del. Thomas S. Hutchinson