



Queen Anne's County

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ZONING

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To: The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

From: Amy G. Moredock, Planning Director

Date: 28 February 2025

Subject: OPPOSITION – SB 931/CF HB1036
Consideration of Queen Anne's County, MD Solar Provisions and the
2024 Solar Solutions Workgroup as relates provisions outlined in HB1036/CF SB 931

Ordinance No. 17-16 – Utility and Small Scale Solar Arrays

Queen Anne's County has been dedicated to supporting the State of Maryland's Renewable Energy Portfolio Goals as indicated by the enacting of Ordinance No. 17-16 as described below. Queen Anne's County, as well as many Maryland Counties, has been an active partner in ensuring the success of utility scale solar array projects as indicated in the statistics below. Queen Anne's County is a major contributor to the implementation of the REP Goals.

- In December 2017, the Queen Anne's County Commissioners enacted utility and small scale solar provisions creating a Utility Scale Solar Array Overlap (USSA) District Map within a two-mile radius on either side of the electric transmission lines with a capacity equal to or greater than 69 kV. This District permits utility scale solar arrays as a conditional use.
- Small scale solar arrays are limited in size to 2 megawatts and permitted as by-right accessory uses defined as a private use facility or net metering system generating solar energy for a single residential home or community neighborhood, a private entity, business, or institutional use. The system may be ground mounted or roof mounted.
- In 2022, the USSA District provisions were amended to expand the siting of a utility scale solar array that is *partially* located with the USSA.
- These provisions enable the County Zoning Administrator to issue building permits for large and small scale solar array projects.

Utility Scale Solar Array District (see attached map):

- A two-mile radius on either side of the electric transmission lines with a capacity equal to or greater than 69 kV. In total, this district encompasses 106,519 acres.
- After GIS analysis of the USSA, there are approximately 30,958 acres of tillable land within the overlay area available for solar development.

Operating Community & Utility Solar Development in QAC:

- Bluegrass approx. 80 megawatts (Pilot program – 408.8 acres)
- Lowin Farms approx. 10 megawatts
- Patchett/Cedar Lane approx. 6 megawatts
- Garcia approx. 2 megawatts (Pilot Program – 18.5 acres)
- Jones Farm approx. 64 megawatts (Pilot Program – 326 acres)
- TOTAL approx. 162 megawatts (Pilot Program – 753.3 acres)

Approved Community & Utility Solar Development in QAC:

- Centreville White approx. 2 megawatts
- Red Lion approx. 2 megawatts
- Cedar Lane Solar approx. 2 megawatts
- TOTAL approx. 6 megawatts

Pending Community & Utility Solar Development in QAC:

- Ruthsburg Solar 1 approx. 5 megawatts

Maryland's Renewable Energy Goal (Renewable Portfolio Standard):

- By 2030: (mandated by law)
 - 50% of the total energy sold in MD shall come from renewable resources.
 - Solar carve-out – out of the above requirement, at least 14.5% of the energy shall come from solar facilities.
- By 2035: (Governor's goal, but not law yet)
 - 100% of the total energy production in MD shall come from renewable resources.
- Acreage of land and megawatts required throughout the State to meet the solar goal of 14.5% by 2030.
 - Approximately anywhere from 11,000 acres to 18,000 acres of Utility-Scale Solar needed to meet the Maryland 2030 standard.
 - There are currently **1,914.44 acres under lease/PILOT/or otherwise dedicated to Utility Scale Solar projects in Queen Anne's County** that are operating, under construction, or approved.
 - **This represents 13.2% of the acreage needed required from Utility-Scale Solar to meet the Maryland 2030 standard** (based on the average projected average needed: 14,500 acres).
 - Approximately 2,274 megawatts required from Utility-Scale Solar to meet the Maryland 2030 standard (per information from the presentation of Bob Sadzinski Director, Power Plant Research Program, at the 2023 MDA Solar Summit).
 - There are currently **168 megawatts of Utility Scale Solar projects in Queen Anne's County** that are operating, under construction, or approved.
 - **This represents 7.4% of the megawatts required from Utility-Scale Solar to meet the Maryland 2030 standard.**

2024 Solar Solutions Workgroup

Queen Anne's County was vested in the 2024 Solar Solutions Workgroup (and in the 2023 Solar Workgroup).

Directly below is a list of the stakeholders who were at the table and/or invited to come to the table. These participants were engaged to varying degrees but with sufficient consistency from the initial 14 June 2024 meeting to the very last meeting on 22 October 2024. We met 6 times, and each meeting was a full-day session. We absolutely worked together and individually in preparation for those work sessions and dedicated at least 100 hours to the Final Draft Bill which was completed in October 2024.

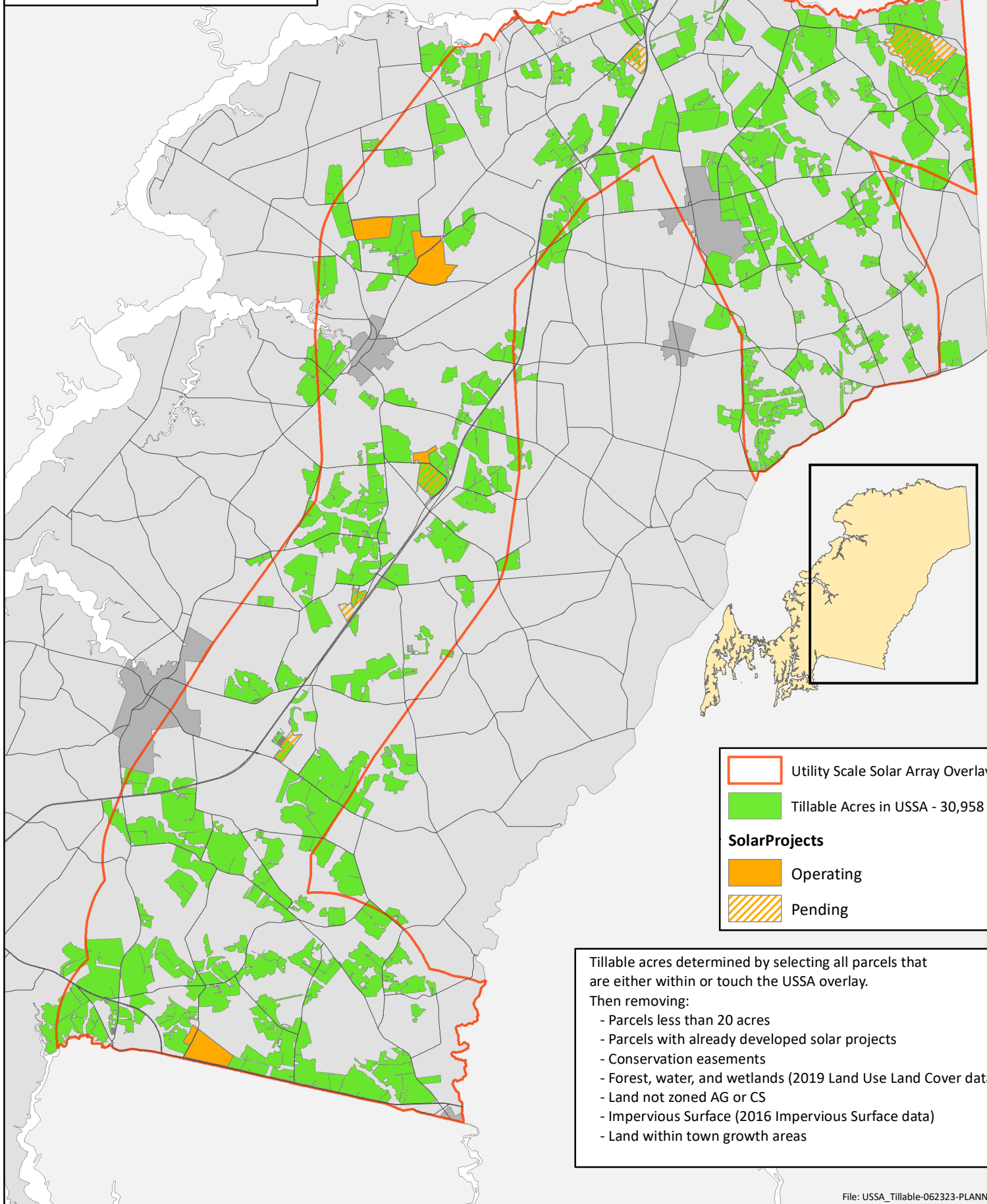
- Administration: Gov's Office, DNR/PPRP, MDA, MDP, MEA, PSC
- Counties: MACo, QAC, FredCo
- Environmental Community: LCV, Forever Maryland
- Industry: CI Renewables, Chaberton, LightStar, REV Renewables, Urban Grid [CHESSA was invited but declined to participate]

Our mission was to put forward a bill in which all parties achieved reasonable transparency, predictability, and compromise and could collectively support a successful piece of solar legislation in the 2025 Session (unlike the same exercise which occurred in 2024 from which the solar industry walked from the table much more quickly and resulted in HB1045/SB1025).

Despite this setback, Queen Anne's County remains committed to continued partnership with a focus on key siting standards agreed upon in October 2024.

Utility Scale Solar Array Overlay Tillable Acres

Queen Anne's County
MARYLAND



Utility Scale Solar Array Overlay

Tillable Acres in USSA - 30,958 ac.

SolarProjects

Operating

Pending

Tillable acres determined by selecting all parcels that are either within or touch the USSA overlay.

Then removing:

- Parcels less than 20 acres
- Parcels with already developed solar projects
- Conservation easements
- Forest, water, and wetlands (2019 Land Use Land Cover data)
- Land not zoned AG or CS
- Impervious Surface (2016 Impervious Surface data)
- Land within town growth areas