



Senate Bill 0983

Solar Energy - Distributed Generation Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity, Ground-Mounted Solar, and Small Solar Siting Workgroup

Position: UNF

Date: March 6, 2025

To: Education, Energy and
Environment

On behalf of the Caroline County Commissioners, we write to express our **strong opposition** to Senate Bill 983, which seeks to establish a **Distributed Generation Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (DGCPCN)** while overriding local land use authority on solar energy projects.

Caroline County has already implemented responsible solar regulations that balance renewable energy development with the protection of our rural character, farmland preservation, and community interests. This bill threatens to undermine our local autonomy by prohibiting counties from enacting zoning laws that restrict or regulate ground-mounted solar facilities under 2 megawatts.

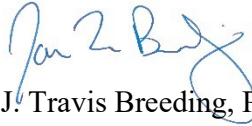
Key Concerns with SB 983

1. Undermines Local Control & Land Use Planning
 - Caroline County has carefully crafted solar policies to ensure responsible development while protecting prime agricultural land and rural communities.
 - SB 983 removes the ability of counties to regulate smaller solar projects, forcing rural counties to accept projects that may not align with their land use priorities.
2. Threat to Farmland & Rural Character
 - Caroline County's economic and cultural identity is rooted in agriculture. Large-scale and unchecked solar development on productive farmland undermines generations of farming heritage.
 - Encouraging solar projects without local oversight could lead to fragmentation of farmland and limit future agricultural use.
3. One-Size-Fits-All Approach Does Not Work for Rural Counties
 - What works for urban and suburban areas may not work for rural agricultural counties like Caroline.
 - SB 983 disregards the unique zoning, environmental, and land use policies already established by local jurisdictions.
4. State Preemption Sets a Dangerous Precedent

- Caroline County supports renewable energy, but it must be implemented through a process that respects local decision-making.
- The Supreme Court of Maryland has previously ruled in *Board of County Commissioners v. Perennial Solar, LLC (2019)* that state law preempts local solar zoning authority. This bill further erodes local governance by expanding preemption even more.

Senate Bill 983 is an overreach that disregards the careful planning efforts of rural counties like Caroline. While we recognize the importance of renewable energy, this bill imposes a top-down approach that threatens farmland, dismisses local regulations, and weakens county authority. We strongly urge the General Assembly to reject SB 983 and instead allow local governments to determine the best approach for solar development within their jurisdictions.

Sincerely,



J. Travis Breeding, President