

Coming to a farm near you!



That is NOT corn or soybeans you see it's 90 acres of solar panels generating power for a Baltimore business.

Pay attention Dorchester County residents! This is what can happen to the farmland around your home if our Zoning laws aren't amended.

Dorchester County's prime agricultural land is at risk of being developed into Solar Utility fields that supply power to the grid.



**And Guess What??
If you live near a field, it
can be right around your home to**

Ask us how you can help

Protecting Dorchester's heritage, attractive rural landscape and important natural resources, especially agriculture.

Energy sprawl is invading Dorchester County at a rapid pace and its citizens are at risk of being grossly and adversely affected by such projects. Declining property values, health concerns, the loss of productive agricultural property, impacts on resident wildlife, scenery, and heritage areas along with allowing an unmanaged industry to operate in Dorchester County without a Comprehensive Plan to effectively manage such projects is of great concern.

The fact that a private for Profit Corporation is planning on putting citizens of Dorchester County in a virtual prison with 8ft chain-link fences leaves little doubt that this is an industrial footprint in your back, front and side yard. To make this clear, this industrial footprint would have:

- 11 or more inverters on concrete pads, (inverters make noise)
- 65,000+ solar panels (solar panels increase heat hrFs://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2015/11/02/surprising-study-finds-that-solar-energy-can-also-cause-climate-change-a-little/)
- A metal racking system with about 13,000 metal piles driven 5 to 7 feet into the ground.

The rural agricultural land that is our heritage and livelihood is seen by outside corporations as underdeveloped land flat and perfect for them to use for their own personal profit. They are flooding the landscape with these utility scale projects while the tax subsidies supported by our tax dollars are available.

The Eastern Shore of Maryland is a targeted Utility Scale Solar area. With the concentration of this power in the rural sections of the State, transmission lines will need to be built to carry the power to the population centers. This will increase the rates for everyone and benefit the corporations. The recently approved power line that will be built by Delmarva Power, crossing the wild and scenic Choptank River, was the result of renewable energy projects being approved in Virginia and Somerset County that exceed the needed capacity of the residents of the county. The transmission of the excess capacity out of the area caused an overload of the existing lines. The cost of the new transmission line has been assessed to the ratepayers of Delmarva Power and Light (they recently have requested a 15% increase in their rates). The benefits of the power line that rate payers are supporting goes to the owners of the solar projects: Amazon owner of 80 MW of power in the Delmarva portion of Virginia and Algonquin and a multinational corporation in Canada the owners of the Somerset project. (PSC case # 9393) As more projects are pushed onto the Eastern Shore, more transmission upgrades are likely to follow.

There would be no Operations and Maintenance on-site nor would the project have a permanent work force. Therefore this project would produce no sustainable growth in employment in the county. In addition the current use of the property uses local labor, and has a net positive benefit in direct, indirect and attributed costs that would be lost with the conversion.

Dorchester has already given up approximately 100 acres 5 miles from this proposed project. That was a project that the Council failed to participate as co-judge of the evening of the public hearing in Dorchester County when asked by the Public Utility Law Judge. Currently in the Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland Regional Transmission Operator's line, 2 other projects totaling an additional 110 MW are in the works. With the estimated land use of solar being approximate 5- 6 acres/MW, another 550 to 660 acres of farmland would be set to be consumed on top of the two current projects that are either approved or about to be approved. There was good reason for the Dorchester County Planning Commission to approve a zoning amendment to require that utility scale solar energy systems only be allowed on commercial and industrial properties within the county. They rejected this measure in the July 2015 P&Z meeting. We would question why. Dorchester County business personal property tax (Dorchester County Code 144-46) was eliminated in July 2015; therefore the only real value that would go to the County is the increase in the assessment rate of the property. Neither the company nor their employees live in Dorchester or Maryland. Corporate income tax imposed would be collected by the State of Maryland. Beware that increased property tax assessment can have a negative effect on School funding due to the wealth/student penalty that decreased the amount paid to County School Districts.

This particular project in East New Market, MD is located within the Heart of the Chesapeake Heritage Area, in close proximity, even in the sight lines of National Historic Register New East Market, Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway and is on a branch of the Michener's Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway.

The Maryland Heritage Areas Program preserves the state's historical, cultural, archeological, and natural resources for sustainable economic development through heritage tourism. When State Agency's carry out activities in the Certified Heritage Area a State agency must consult, cooperate, and, to the maximum extent feasible, coordinate their activities with the entity responsible for the management of the CHA and ensure that activities will not have an adverse effect on the resources of the Heritage Area unless there is no prudent and feasible alternative.

MACo has recently taken up the fight for the County Governments to preserve their right to zone property within their borders. Our Council must strongly consider zoning amendments that designate appropriate placement of utility scale solar energy. The current zoning that leaves all agricultural land open to these large projects regardless of the impacts of homeowners is unacceptable. Until and unless that occurs no projects should be approved. The Ag industry is at risk if controls are not put in place.

The 1996 Comprehensive Plan that Dorchester County is currently operating under is neither current nor reflective of a vision for the County and does not serve the citizens that the county government is supposed to represent. Without a structured managed plan for Solar Utility projects, that include all phases of solar utility development (inception to decommissioning) , for profit companies that design, develop, install and sell such facilities are in charge of the County's fate, instead of the citizens of Dorchester County. Therefore unless and until the County's comprehensive plan is revised, that includes a Solar-Utility Scale plan, all projects should be rejected until an inclusive plan is in place.

This project, if allowed to proceed, would be under a 25 year lease agreement. Many in my neighborhood have lived in our homes longer than 25 years. This is a long established farm neighborhood. Our way of life, surrounded by wildlife, corn, beans, grain silos, acres of quiet farmland and strong neighborhood values is being threatened by a company claiming to provide a safe and 'green' alternative to traditionally produced. Make no mistake, these facilities are far from clean.