



September 24, 2020

Planning Board, Board of Supervisors, Southampton County

To whom it may concern,

Across the country communities are considering how and where to permit solar PV projects. Many have solar ordinances, some have laws.

Considering your communities' recent stances on the subject matter, I thought you would find it interesting to learn about legislation passed in August by the New Jersey Senate. New Jersey has been dealing with a long-standing mandate prohibiting the development of solar on agricultural land.

The legislature considered that existing farmland was not prohibited from being converted to warehousing, commercial business, and housing developments, permanent developments that lose farmland forever. The law now allows producing clean energy and income for landowners and municipalities from solar which actually preserves farmland for future return to agricultural use at the solar project's end of life. This legislation (S-2605) has won approval from the Senate Environment and Energy Committee.

Both New Jersey and Virginia have enacted similar laws to set a path moving towards a net zero carbon electricity supply. Farming and Clean Energy are both important and the New Jersey move shows that it is possible to embrace both. Farmland is already being converted for alternate uses that are not exclusively agricultural, and solar is a more productive use of that land which preserves the option of reclaiming it for agricultural use again in the future.

As we continue to work with our clients to identify suitable project sites for solar, some landowners may wish to use parts of their farmland to solar development. Where this meets a considered solar ordinance or legislation, the landowner, the community, the county, and the environment can all win.

Solar Grids on NJ Farmland article attached.

Please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Melanson".

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