



The Planning Committee
Southampton County
c/o Beth Lewis AICP
Community Development Director
24283 Cheroenhaka Drive
Courtland, VA 23837

December 2nd 2020

To the Members of the Planning Committee and officials,

We have several properties under lease in Southampton County and have the intention to develop these properties for utility scale solar.

I would like to thank the board and the officials for a thorough review of the current solar ordinance and the consideration on how to further improve on it.

As a solar developer we welcome the opportunity to be involved in these discussions and provide an industry perspective. I would like to comment on some of the proposed amendments to the solar ordinance;

The current proposal is to add language to **Sec. 18-625**. - Location, appearance, and operation of a project site.

Specifically;

- (f) A 1 mile distance from incorporated towns.*
- (g) A 1 mile distance from residential zoning. R-1 and R-2*
- (h) No applications in the A-2, agricultural, zoning district*

The restrictions in combination with the available electrical infrastructure in Southampton County effectively rule out the majority of any meaningful utility scale solar development.

This would deny Southampton County the benefits that utility scale solar brings in terms of employment, inward investment and local tax revenue or revenue share.

I know that the three projects that my company is proposing alone would bring **more than \$10m** in lease payments, revenue share and local tax revenue to the county over the life of the projects. All three projects are located in A-2 zoned areas because that is where the electrical infrastructure from Dominion allows for such projects. A blanket ban on solar projects in these districts or a blanket ban of 1 mile from any incorporated Town or Residentially zoned district denies the landowners and citizens of Southampton County the benefits of solar energy projects.



I would like to urge the Board to re-consider these restrictions. They do not in itself protect prime agricultural land of the A2 zone, which is already earmarked for future development. Allowing development, including the temporary use as a solar facility, would bring the anticipated financial benefits of such anticipated development forward.

Of course, each utility scale solar application needs to be considered on its individual merits, including use of agricultural land, visibility, screening, landowner rights, financial benefit to the County and any objections or approvals of the neighboring property owners.

As a final point, I would like to offer dialogue with the Board on the subject of agrivoltaics; the simultaneous use of the same land parcel for solar and agriculture, and recommend that there be room for such innovation in the solar ordinance.

We look forward to continuing the conversation with Southampton County to find solutions that allows all of us to flourish.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Frank Dekker", is written over a light blue circular stamp or watermark.

Frank Dekker

Managing Partner