



MARYLAND
Association of
COUNTIES

County Renewable Energy Siting



For
Task Force on Renewable
Energy and Siting
2019-10-17






Climate Change & Renewable Energy Goals

- 🏛️ **Current Climate Change Goal: 25% greenhouse gas reductions from 2006 levels by 2025.**
- 🏛️ **New Climate Change Goal: 40% greenhouse gas reductions from 2006 levels by 2030 with “aspirational goal” of 80% by 2050**
- 🏛️ **Renewable Energy Goal: Clean Energy Jobs Act of 2019 requires 50% renewable energy by 2030 (14.5% solar)**
- 🏛️ **Clean Electricity Goal: Clean and Renewable Energy Standard (CARES) calls for 100% clean electricity by 2040**





MACo Position on Solar Energy Siting

-  **MACo supports solar energy development with local zoning and siting requirements as part of the project approval process.**
-  **MACo recognizes that there needs to be a mix of rooftop, community, and utility-scale solar projects to meet Maryland's renewable energy goals and has established the following prioritization for solar projects:**
 -  **rooftop solar**
 -  **brownfields, grayfields (such as parking lots and warehouse rooftops), industrial areas, and appropriate government-owned lands (i.e., landfills and wastewater treatment plants);**
 -  **open space zoned for solar by local governments, with appropriate protections for prime farmland, forestlands, critical areas and wetlands, environmentally sensitive areas, and areas of cultural or historical importance.**



MACo's Record on Solar Energy Siting

- **MACo became engaged on solar siting siting in 2016**
- **MACo supported HB 1350 of 2017 as a Legislative Initiative**
 - Requires the Public Service Commission to give due consideration to a project's consistency with local comprehensive plans and zoning, as well as the efforts of parties to address concerns raised by local governments (Bill passed)
- **MACo supported HB 1588 of 2018**
 - Removed a concern about unintended consequences of solar development under the "change or mistake" rule (Bill passed)
- **MACo supported SB 744 of 2019 as amended by the Senate**
 - Would have established a Commission on the Development of a Blueprint for Solar Energy in Maryland (Bill failed in House)



MACo's Record on Solar Energy Siting

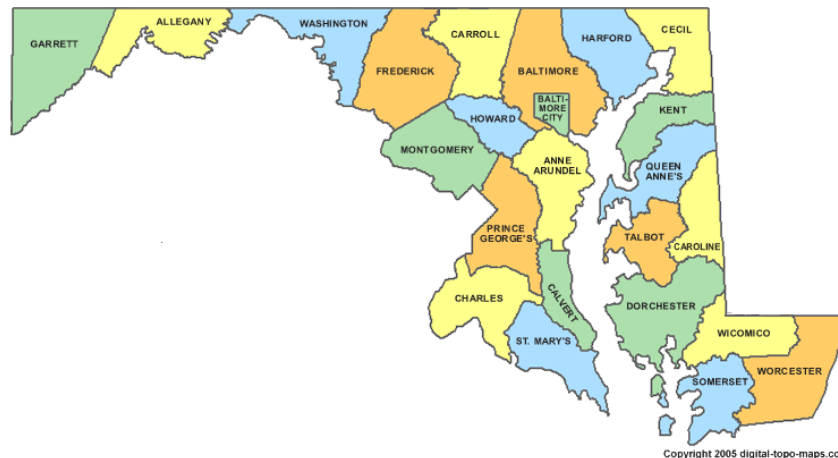
- 🏛️ **MACo opposed HB 627/SB 610 of 2019**
 - 🏛️ Would have exempted solar equipment for utility scale solar developments from being subject to a personal property tax and instead required counties to collect an annual fee based on per megawatt capacity (bills failed – withdrawn)
- 🏛️ **MACo has worked with counties on revising and updating their zoning to better manage utility scale solar facilities and advocated for the expansion of net-metering to encourage more mid-size solar projects on landfills or other county-owned lands**
 - 🏛️ **Caroline, Harford, Kent, Montgomery, Somerset, Washington**







Core Principles

- Renewable energy development similar to other forms of development – recognize has both pros and cons
- County zoning and revenue structures should be respected by both the State and renewable energy developers
- Renewable energy developers should reach out to affected county as early as possible
- Counties should provide certainty of process for renewable energy developers
- State role should be one of collaboration and not preemption
- One size does not fit all!





County Zoning Actions for Utility Scale Solar Projects

-  Kent County was the pioneer
-  Identify areas (by category or through plats) restrict or discourage solar development
-  Identify areas (by category or through plats) to allow or encourage solar development
-  Recognize grid connection & capacity
-  Stakeholder process (Caroline, Queen Anne's, Talbot)
-  Moratorium (Caroline, Talbot, Frederick)
-  Aggregate development caps (Caroline, Talbot)
-  Project development caps (Frederick)
-  Special exception requirement (Washington)
-  Industrial zones (Carroll)



Help for Counties

- Education on regional (PJM) grid issues and project application process
- Relevant grid infrastructure data
- Best practices & examples for zoning & siting
- Clarity on State position for solar development
- State incentives & disincentives for solar development
- Renewable energy developer education
- Public education
- Funding
- Technical assistance





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