



VIRGINIA SOLAR LAND USE NEWS OF NOTE

April 28, 2023

Fauquier County

On April 20, the county Planning Commission recommended to the Board of Supervisors to not issue special use permits for two utility scale solar facilities. The Commission voted 4 to 1 against a recommendation for Alameda Solar North and Alameda Solar South, together constituting 663 acres and 70-90 MW, developed by Open Road Renewables. Sowego Energy, a 466, 80 MW project developed by Torch Clean energy received a 3-2 vote against recommendation. The Planning Commissioners noted that they believed the projects were too big and did not comply with the county's Comprehensive Plan. [Read more here.](#)

Halifax County

Longroad Energy's 108 MW, 1,479 acre Foxhound Solar project is the first utility scale solar project to be Virginia Pollinator-Smart certified. The Pollinator-Smart program launched in 2019 and encourages solar development to be pollinator-friendly using a scorecard and rating system. Foxhound Solar will plant native grasses and other wildflowers surrounding the solar arrays to meet the program's requirements. [Read more here.](#)

Henry County

On April 25, the Board of Supervisors voted down an SUP for Axton Solar, a 200 MW, 435 acre facility developed by Vesper Energy. The county's solar ordinance only allows for 2.5% of the acreage in a 5 mile radius to be used for solar. Policing density closely and citing the potential for litigation, the Board voted to reject the application, because Axton Solar could potentially go to 2.6%. After the vote, Vesper Energy Community Affairs Manager Alex Rohr said that the company will go back and see what can be done to accommodate the concern regarding density. [Read more here.](#)

Isle of Wight County

The Board of Supervisors has postponed a vote on a solar ordinance that would limit the cumulative acreage of existing and proposed solar facilities to 2% of the county's prime farmland, effectively imposing a moratorium. The vote was scheduled for April 20, and out of the 12 speakers, 7 were in support of the ordinance. [Read more here.](#)

UPDATE: The Planning Commission voted 9-1 to recommend the Board of Supervisors issue an SUP for Prairie Solar, a 20 MW, 432 acre solar facility developed by Energix, discussed in our [April 7 Newsletter](#). The project is expected to generate \$3.3 million in real estate and machinery and tools tax revenue over its 35 year lifespan. The Board of Supervisors will have a final vote on May 18. [Read more here.](#)

Madison County

In a work session, the Planning Commission determined that the application for Springbrook Farm, a 59 acre facility first reported on in our [April 21 Newsletter](#), is not ready to go to public hearing. The application did not include a signed feasibility study, cost/benefit analysis, viewshed analysis, or decommissioning plan. The public hearing has been pushed from May 3 to June 7. [Read more here.](#)

Shenandoah County

On April 25, the Board of Supervisors voted to amend the county's solar ordinance. The update limits individual facilities to 50 acres for every mile of buffer of a solar facility. This change had not been included in the draft approved by the Planning Commission discussed in our [April 14 Newsletter](#). [Read more here.](#)