

# POSITION STATEMENT FORM

## **GENERAL SUBJECT AREA -- TITLE OF PROPOSAL:**

Solar energy collection on buildings and parking lots

## **PROPOSAL:** *(Provide brief description of legislative or funding position)*

Provide localities the ability to require solar energy on buildings and parking lots as properties are redeveloped. This requirement should apply to both by right or special exception projects. The solar energy generated should first benefit the facility upon which it is sited. Property owners should be encouraged to incorporate battery storage to store energy. If there is excess solar energy, it could be sold back at the retail price to the electric utility serving that jurisdiction.

## **SOURCE:** *(Provide the name of the agency, board, or commission generating the proposal and the date of the proposal)*

EQAC

## **BACKGROUND:**

This recommendation proposes to build upon the county's support for solar energy, as outlined in the 2025 legislative program. However, it does not include supporting legislation that could be used to require placement of solar energy collection systems on building roofs and parking lots.

The growing electrical demands have been unprecedented and resulted in challenging public electric utilities' abilities to deliver energy to all customers and questioned the ability of our aging electrical infrastructure to carry the electricity needed to serve the county. Solar energy on buildings will pay for itself, would help to reduce the strain on our aging electrical grid, and will help to meet our climate related goals.

The Sierra Club's report on data centers highlights the increases in energy demand, the tradeoffs between energy and water use, the increases in water utilization. The energy, water and other needs of data centers have not been anticipated and the threat that data center energy demands are presenting to our ability to achieve Virginia Clean Economy Act carbon neutrality goals, as well as other challenges posed by data centers.

While providing solar energy on rooftops and parking lots would not solve the energy challenges of our region, solar energy on roofs and parking lots would reduce the strain on the electrical grid and provide a tool to reduce the long-term energy costs for property owners.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

*(Do not fill out-- This will be indicated by the Legislative Director and County Executive)*

# POSITION STATEMENT INFORMATION SHEET

(Supplemental background information to be used by staff)

## **GENERAL SUBJECT AREA -- TITLE OF PROPOSAL:**

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## **ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

*(Additional information may be necessary to fully develop the idea. Please assume that government relations staff may need additional technical information to fully explain the proposal and the necessity for the proposal.)*

In order to support the state's energy needs, especially northern Virginia, solar farms are being built in forests and on prime agricultural land. The placement of these solar facilities are largely being based upon access to transmission lines that can carry the electricity generated by the solar farms.

[Fairfax County's 2025 legislative program](#) provides a number of supportive statement including support for increased solar on residential and commercial buildings. The agenda states:

- Advance legislation that expands opportunities for net metering programs, which allow eligible customers to offset their power consumption by selling self-generated renewable power back to the energy grid.
- Eliminate caps on Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs), which can facilitate the adoption of renewable energy by reducing or eliminating the up-front costs of such projects, thus assisting in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other forms of pollution.
- Expand the availability of shared solar programs by increasing or eliminating program caps and establishing customer safeguards to ensure community members can take advantage of such programs, which provide residents and businesses the opportunity to participate in the renewable energy market by purchasing solar-generated electricity and receiving renewable energy credits associated with their subscription to a shared solar facility.
- Provide incentives to encourage solar energy on existing buildings, sites with existing impervious surface, and brownfields. Also ensure the fair allocation of interconnection fees between utilities and solar developers (such fees include equipment costs from the site of the solar installation to the utility's substation). At present, solar developers are required to pay the full cost of connecting their projects to the larger electric grid, including any upgrades the utility says are necessary, threatening the economic viability of such solar installations.

There have been considerable Virginia legislative support for renewable energy legislation in 2024 and 2025.

## **ALIGNMENT TO ONE FAIRFAX GOALS:**

While all parties would be impacted by blackouts due to energy shortages, an inadequate water supply or other impacts, disadvantaged communities would be disproportionately impacted

because they would have fewer resources to adjust to these problems. Moreover, the rapid unplanned growth in energy is contributing to increased cost of electricity, which will also disproportionately impact disadvantaged community members.

**POSSIBLE SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION BY ORGANIZATIONS:**

*(List any organizations or groups, if any, which might be in favor of or against the proposed position)*

Environmental groups (Sierra Club, Piedmont Environmental Council, Nature Forward) are likely to support. The Virginia Conservation Network, which includes over 150 Network Partners across the Commonwealth ([full list of Network Partners](#)), supported these legislative proposals. Environmental groups in Fairfax, the Sierra Club Great Falls and Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions, have led local and state-wide efforts. Community groups are also likely to support. Resistance is most likely to come from building developers who are concerned with the addition of solar panels and infrastructure impacting profits.

**STAFF CONTACT PERSON(S):**

*(Provide name and phone number of County staff person(s) best able to provide any additional research or necessary information)*