

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the proposed solar panel installation project and its potential negative impact on both the environment and valuable farmland in our community. While renewable energy is an important goal, it is essential that we consider the unintended consequences before moving forward.

As someone born and raised here, I feel like it is my duty to stand up and speak out about the negative outcomes this proposed solar plan could bring. Not only are there environmental impacts associated with installing solar panels there is also deep ties to surrounding properties and the people who live here that will be affected. I was present during the April 3rd meeting of this year where I sat amongst a room full of community members who were in attendance because they too feel the same way about this project. To hear strangers stand in front of us and attempt to explain how this is a great idea with little to no impact environmentally and or visually was infuriating. Imagine living here your entire life and someone who has spent very little time here, is trying to convince a room full of locals that this won't affect them and if it does, it will be minor.

That is not for them to decide as this proposed solar installation may impact each and every single member of this community differently. People here have spent their lives building out their homes and making a life for themselves and their family's which as we know isn't always easy and to be told that placing solar panels in their direct view of their property they worked so hard for was honestly just disrespectful. If the proposed panels are installed, the people that told us that it would have little to no impact will likely never come back. They do not have to wake up every morning to open their doors to see a line of utility poles going up a new driveway through the middle of a field that once was filled with deer and turkeys and other wildlife. They do not have to wake up and open their curtains and see an entire piece of a once beautiful rolling field filled with solar panels. Land that they purchased and lived on for decades just to be devalued overnight because someone woke up and decided they need a retirement plan. Of course people who aren't from around here won't notice some panels that sit back on a hill as they are passing through, but locals will. The people who have been here for decades, who have built this community and have sustained its viability and drive these roads daily will.

In addition who does this sustainable energy go to? Does it lower energy bills for residents of Ancramdale and surrounding towns? I don't believe that to be the case. Who does it benefit?

As someone that is a part of the next generation that has to live with the decisions that you make today, I feel it is necessary I stand up for what our family's have sacrificed to build for us to step into and I urge you to reconsider.

Outside of emotional and financial harm to community members, there are environmental effects as well.

---

First, the production of solar panels themselves carries a significant environmental cost. The mining of raw materials, such as quartz, lithium, and rare earth metals, has been linked to pollution, habitat destruction, and greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, solar panels often contain toxic substances like cadmium and lead, which pose risks if panels are damaged or improperly disposed of. With limited recycling options currently available, large-scale installations today may become a serious waste problem in the decades ahead.

Second, the proposed solar development on farmland would have long-term consequences for our agricultural resources. Productive farmland is a limited and irreplaceable asset. Converting it into a solar site not only reduces our ability to grow food or produce other natural farm products such as hay but also disrupts ecosystems and soil health. Solar farms often require grading and soil compaction, which can permanently alter the land and make future farming difficult or even impossible if future successors should choose to attempt to turn it back to farm land.

Furthermore, placing solar farms in rural areas can fragment habitats, disrupt pollinators essential for crops, and alter water drainage patterns. These changes may harm local biodiversity and reduce crop productivity in surrounding areas. In an era of increasing concern over food security, protecting farmland should remain a top priority.

Renewable energy is a worthy pursuit, but it should not come at the expense of the very land that sustains us and the ecosystem around us. Alternative options are available without sacrificing farmland and damaging the environment and disrupting the community.

I urge you to reconsider this proposal and to explore solutions that balance the need for clean energy with the equally critical need to preserve farmland and protect our environment for future generations, including mine.

Sincerely,

Tara Dellea