



Shenandoah County Chamber of Commerce
Economic Development Council
c/o Aaron Bushong
Bushong Contracting Corporation
279 Wetzel Road
Woodstock, VA 22664

February 10, 2022

Mr. Karl Roulston, Chairman
Shenandoah County Board of Supervisors
154 N. Church Street
Woodstock, VA 22664

Dear Mr. Roulston,

I write on behalf of the Shenandoah County Chamber of Commerce **Economic Development Council (EDC)**.

Recently members have brought to our attention the large scale proposed solar facilities in Shenandoah County. Based on council member and community concerns, the EDC has discussed this matter at length. We have consulted with county officials to better understand the current zoning process for such facilities. We have read the County Zoning Ordinance and noted that large scale solar facilities are allowed by special permit in all but one county zoning district. Additionally, large wind facilities are allowed by special permit in all county zoning districts.

As an Economic Development Council, our intention is to address issues that have an economic impact on Shenandoah County businesses. Our concern is that current zoning allows, by special permit, large scale solar and wind anywhere in the county. The only restriction is solar is not allowed in the C-1 District. We feel that such expansive projects would be best served by a separate zoning classification. This would allow specific requirements to reduce the possibility of issues relating to the best use of the property for tax base, reduced property valuations based on view shed, perception by businesses that solar or wind facilities may be placed near their locations and the negative effect on tourism.

We would like to suggest that a Renewable Energy Zoning District be created thereby removing the special permit accommodations from the remaining zoning districts. This new district would require the interested party to obtain a change in zoning in order for the project to progress. The intention being that the location of each project would be specifically and independently reviewed for best use of the land base prior to approval. We also recommend, as part of the application process, a third party review of the view shed & noise studies and verification of the amount of the recommissioning bond. This model would be more reflective of requests for industrial zoning. In addition to the standard requirements for the new district, additional evaluation should occur for excessively large projects and/or those in conservation or agricultural districts that could adversely impact rural character and agricultural function.

Furthermore, if this zoning district is created, language could be added to the 2045 Comprehensive Plan to state our counties vision for this specialty industry.

Please understand that this letter is not intended to state our approval or disapproval of renewable energy but rather more specifically address these unique facilities within Shenandoah County.

We appreciate your review of this suggestion.

Please let me know if you would like to discuss the request further or if I can assist in another matter.

Sincerely,

Aaron Bushong, Chairman
Economic Development Council

Sarah Cohen, Council Member
Route 11 Potato Chips

Dennis A. Dysart, Council Member
First Bank

Jim Guisewhite, Council Member
SVN

Bill Holtzman, Council Member
Holtzman Oil & Propane

Dexter Mumaw, Council Member
Cabin Hill Homes

Kelly Sager, Council Member
Sager Real Estate

Keith Stephens, Council Member
Gateway Hospitality

Jeff Manning, Council Member
Shentel

Justin Pence, Council Member
Blue Point ATM

cc: Evan Vass, County Administrator
Lemuel Hancock, Community Development Director
Jenna French, Director of Tourism and Economic Development
Tyler Hinkle, County Planner