

Wanda Parrish

From: Warren, John <john.warren@dmme.virginia.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, March 6, 2019 2:42 PM
To: Chris Yakabouski; Kevin Marshall; Timothy J. McLaughlin; David Ross; Thomas G. Benton; Paul D. Trampe; Gary Skinner
Cc: Wanda Parrish
Subject: Fwd: Response to DMME ltr to Spotsylvania County BOS

Dear Chairman Trampe-

I heard the stakeholder's comment from the recent public meeting regarding DMME changing our position on the proposed solar project. The stakeholder claimed that DMME no longer endorsed the project, basing the claim on a prior email exchange I had with Mr Fogarty. I wanted to share the entire email exchange so you could see that my responses to Mr. Fogarty's inquiries do not support what the stakeholder claimed. DMME's position has not changed as the stakeholder suggested, and DMME remains an advocate based on the advantages noted in DMME's original January 11 support letter. I hope the reaction to the comments did not result in any confusion on DMME's position and if so, that this helps clarify.

Please let me know if I can be of further service,
John Warren
Director, VA DMME

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Sean Fogarty <sfogarty77@verizon.net>
Date: Fri, Feb 22, 2019 at 9:13 PM
Subject: Re: Response to DMME ltr to Spotsylvania County BOS
To: Warren, John <john.warren@dmme.virginia.gov>

Mr. Warren,

Thank you for the clarification.

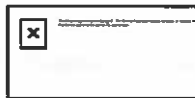
Best regards,

Sean Fogarty

On Feb 21, 2019, at 3:22 PM, Warren, John <john.warren@dmme.virginia.gov> wrote:

Mr. Fogarty-I wanted to clarify that DMME's role as an advocate for renewable energy, energy efficiency/conservation, and alternative fuel vehicles does not involve the responsibility for siting determinations or approvals for specific projects. I was mainly seeking to point out additional advantages of such projects as they are being considered for approval by those with approval responsibility. In this case, that would be Spotsylvania County officials, who seem to be sensitive to concerns from stakeholders such as yourself. I believe your efforts provide a valuable check-and-balance to the local decision-making process.

Thank you for your interest and involvement,



John W. Warren

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On Sun, Feb 17, 2019 at 9:59 PM Sean Fogarty <sfogarty77@verizon.net> wrote:

Mr. Warren,

Thank you for your response to my email. I'm encouraged that you agree that distributed solar needs more emphasis. Corporations in Virginia should be pushed to consider distributed solar energy on all of their facilities in the state - a much less destructive way to achieve renewable energy goals.

You point out that "large corporate business prospects that choose Virginia due to the availability of solar energy provide much needed diversity to an economy with a history of being overly dependent on federal spending." This massive solar utility being proposed in Spotsylvania County (and others around the state) are heavily dependent upon federal tax credits and spending for its survival (greater than 50% when federal and state credits/exemptions are considered along with the tax code's treatment of renewable energy credits). Thus, Virginia exchanges one type of federal spending for another, less reliable type of spending. I suggest DMME study the real financial benefits of these massive utility solar facilities and the further dependence on a government supported industry that they bring. Additionally, sPower's exposure in the PG&E bankruptcy is significant and should not be ignored when evaluating this proposal and this industry.

Again, it would help to understand how you determined that this location in Spotsylvania is a "suitable site" for this massive facility. I also reiterate my invitation for you and your staff to visit the site and talk to our group ASAP.

Best regards,

Sean Fogarty

Concerned Citizens Spotsylvania County

www.protectspotsylvania.com

On Feb 14, 2019, at 10:42 AM, Warren, John <john.warren@dmme.virginia.gov> wrote:

Dear Mr. Fogarty,

Thank you for sharing your concerns. I agree with several of your issues, but respectfully look at others a little differently. As with many projects, visual impacts and land disturbance associated with siting are very important issues.

These impacts are also taken into consideration as part of the local approval process and local stakeholders such as yourself provide an important check-and-balance. It looks as though in this case local stakeholders have offered a strong case for decision-makers to include the project disadvantages presented to them in their consideration. I also agree with you that distributed solar is an important part of the solution that has not been given much chance to contribute. With respect to public benefit, Virginia's overall economy has a large role in determining the long-term well being of it's residents. Large corporate business prospects that choose Virginia due to the availability of solar energy provide much needed diversity to an economy with a history of being overly dependent on federal spending. As for public health and environment, I believe there is widespread agreement that solar energy and other renewable sources offer distinct air and water quality advantages over conventional generation counterparts.

New solutions often come with new challenges and stakeholder engagement is a vital step toward long-term progress. Thanks for your feedback and your participation in the process.



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On Tue, Feb 12, 2019 at 8:42 PM Sean Fogarty <sfogarty77@verizonnet> wrote:

02/12/19

Dear Mr. Warren,

As a resident of Spotsylvania County, I read with interest your letter to our Board of Supervisors dated January 11th, 2019, Subject: Letter of Support for the sPower 500 MW Proposed Solar Project. Our county is on the frontlines of an ill-considered proposal to build the largest utility scale solar facility east of the Rockies and the only one in the top 10 that is not in mostly uninhabited desert conditions. In case you are unaware, this 500MW, 6,350 acre site has already suffered the clearcutting of over 5,000 acres of trees to make way for this "green" project. I welcome your analysis of how this is a "suitable site"

for expanded solar development. Our county staff has specified 20 pages of conditions to attempt to mitigate the risks to the county and its citizens and still our Planning Commission has wisely recommended disapproval of 470MW of the 500MW proposed. We are hopeful that our Board of Supervisors will deny the entire project so that we can consider well researched, properly scaled and sited requests for solar projects in the future.

Our county officials and its concerned citizens have been studying the 3 Special Use Permits for this project for over a year. County staff, officials and residents investigated and analyzed this industry and the myriad of problems that it brings to a community and deduced that the negative effects outweigh any benefits. You and your department did not participate in these discussions but now, at the 11th hour, have decided to weigh in with a letter trying to convince our Supervisors to vote against the very interests of county residents.

Your letter talks about Virginia jobs but most of the construction jobs will be filled by out of state contractors and that, during the operations phase, there will only be a handful of workers. Accomack County and Southampton County have the two largest utility solar facilities in the state. I encourage you to check with those officials to get the details on the minimal uptick to the local economy during construction and the complete lack of follow-on economic development. As with all of these utility solar facilities, Spower's entire plant will be run out of Utah.

Filling "important renewable energy goals of Microsoft" is not the job of Spotsylvania County officials. Microsoft will not be bringing any jobs to our county related to this project - the energy would be generated in Spotsylvania County by a large corporation and exported to the PJM grid to be used by other large corporations - possibly not even in Virginia. Why must our county deal with all of the environmental problems, loss of local revenues and the risks of this massive project so that a few corporations can benefit? The job of County Supervisors is to act in the public interest, not the interest of large multinational corporations: "Recognizing that stewardship of the public interest must be their primary concern, members will work for the common good of the people of Spotsylvania County and not for any private or personal interest..." (Spotsylvania County Code of Ethics).

Achieving the state's renewable energy goals can be done more effectively and less intrusively by looking at brownfield and distributed solar, not pushing for permanently changing agricultural land designated as Farmland of Statewide Importance and Prime Farmland into an industrial site for 35 years. Establishing lofty goals, waiving 80% of our local taxes on these facilities, leaving all of the work on a 500MW massive plant to the county and then pressuring the county to approve it is not a sensible path for success.

Your lobbying on behalf of a private company is unseemly and contradictory to your mission to "enhance the development of energy in a safe and environmentally sound" manner. Our group would be happy to host you on a tour of the area and discuss the real impacts of a utility scale solar facility of this size near residential neighborhoods.

Thank you,

Sean Fogarty

On behalf of Concerned Citizens of Spotsylvania County
(CCSC)



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John W. Warren

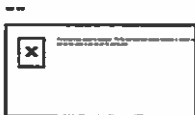
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