



BEAVER RIVER VALLEY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 10
Shannock, RI 02875

June 5, 2019

The Honorable Justin Price
Rhode Island House of Representatives
214 Shannock Village Road
Richmond, RI 02875

Dear Representative Price,

The Beaver River Valley Community Association (BRVCA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation and preservation of the Beaver River Valley in Richmond, Rhode Island. The BRVCA is concerned regarding proposed legislation H-5789 currently under consideration by the House of Representatives. We urge you to oppose this bill. If passed, this legislation will severely limit the ability of cities and towns to regulate solar energy siting.

The Beaver River Valley remains one of the few rural and scenic landscapes in the state that retains a high level of integrity. Additionally, the Beaver River Valley contains significant historical and cultural sites - such as the Samuel Clarke Farm, c. 1691 (National Register of Historic Places #SG100003413), The Village of Shannock Historic District (National Register of Historic Places #83000005) and scenic open space and forests - it also includes an extremely important and federally-protected watershed. The combination of these assets and resources make for a uniquely important cultural landscape.

Insensitively sited ground-mounted solar panels threaten to ruin the agricultural character of this rural part of Rhode Island. It is important to know that the BRVCA is not against renewable energy or solar installations. As with any development, however, there is a need for balance, good planning, and appropriate siting. Like many of our colleagues throughout the state, the BRVCA believes that this planning must be carried out at the local level with input from the regulatory bodies that guide all other municipal land use decisions, such as Zoning and Planning boards and City/Town Councils.

We appreciate the need for solar energy siting reforms in Rhode Island. Unfortunately the proposed legislation falls short of achieving that goal. Instead it will undermine local authorities and resident input in a critical long-term planning process that will have lasting impacts on the character of all 39 cities and towns.

As an alternative to H-5789, the BRVCA respectfully urges you to adopt a short-term moratorium on solar development greater than 250 kilowatts in residential zones or projects with a footprint greater than 40,000 square feet until solar siting reforms have been adopted by the General Assembly. An exception to the moratorium could include any site that has already been disturbed, such as a landfill or gravel pit, as that would direct solar development to those brown- and gray-field sites.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. Should you have any questions, the Beaver River Valley Community Association can be reached by email via BeaverRiverValley@gmail.com.

Respectfully,

Beaver River Valley Community Association

CC: House Speaker Nicholas Mattiello, Representative Brian Patrick Kennedy