



The following questions/concerns about solar (in blue) were raised by a local stakeholder at the July 21st Nottoway BOS meeting. SolUnesco encourages stakeholders to bring their concerns for public discussion and appreciates the opportunity to provide the following responses:

Several questions were raised on whether outside actors were being allowed undue influence in the County's efforts to update their Solar Ordinance and Comp plan.

SolUnesco has had the same access to this public process as any other stakeholder. We have used the public hearing process, as it was intended, to raise various concerns and we continue to have our own questions with what is currently being proposed. We recognize that the county is under no obligation to act on our feedback and believe that all stakeholder participation should be encouraged and is critical to this public process.

SolUnesco has also met with one-on-one with various Nottoway officials. These types of meetings are entirely common in all development types. Dialogue is key when exploring a new development with a community. We use these meetings to hear concerns and provide the industry perspective on solar development. It is our expectation and understanding that other stakeholders are conducting their own outreach to Nottoway officials; the opportunity to do so is not exclusively offered to developers.

Have any of these solar companies ever decommissioned a solar site? If so, what was done to the used equipment, panels, etc.? Were they recycled or trashed? Was the land restored to the previous condition? Soil/topsoil returned? Trees planted, grass and shrubs planted and fertilized?

Regardless of a company's experience/prior methods, Nottoway clearly outlines its requirements for these items in Section 4-19-9, item 4 of the Draft Renewable Ordinance. Each project will be required to submit a precise plan for meeting these requirements and will be reviewed on a project-by-project basis.

I don't think anyone can tell you the cost of decommissioning. Who's estimate is it? Are they taking inflation into account? Who's paying for it? I heard they use bonds – won't be worth half what they are in 20 years with the way things are going.

Counties generally require cost estimates be prepared/certified by a qualified third-party engineering firm. Per the Draft Ordinance, Section 4-19-9, Item 7, a financial surety will be provided by the facility owner to the county in accordance with Virginia Code § 15.2-2241.2 which includes several acceptable forms, including bonds. The Draft Renewable Ordinance also requires the cost estimate (and, if needed, the surety) be updated every 5 years to mitigate concerns over inflation or other changing conditions.

1 in 10 panels are recycled. Cost is not economically feasible to recycle these things.

While the materials in a solar panel do have considerable value, current methods to separate can be even more expensive. As such, it's true that 9 out of 10 panels that are being decommissioned today are ending up in landfills. However, panel recycling is in its infancy and there is considerable investment in this industry in anticipation of increasing value of materials and decreasing cost of extraction. It is reasonable to expect that by the time current projects are being decommissioned (35-50 years from now) recycling may be the most economic method of disposal. Also, if Nottoway is concerned that panels may eventually end up in local landfills,

assurances to avoid this can be added as a condition. More about trends in panel recycling can be found at:

<https://cleantechnica.com/2022/07/17/solar-panel-recycling-is-about-to-become-big-business/>

How many of you would want one of these industrial sites within 500 feet of your home or within 300 feet of your property line?

Site specifics should and will be reviewed for each proposal but these distances, combined with the screening requirements in Nottoway's Draft Renewable Ordinance, should be sufficient to ensure that solar equipment will not be seen from outside the property. So long as solar sites are visually screened, there is no additional hazard emanating from a solar site that might require additional distance as a mitigation measure.

Would you be concerned about runoff?

Of course, and the state has a process (separate from the zoning process) in place to mitigate this risk. We are aware of solar projects in Virginia that have had runoff issues. While runoff failures are never acceptable, we would note these occurrences are generally releases of silt during construction. We are not aware of instances of foreign or hazardous substances in waterways and/or devastating permanent ecological impact, as has been claimed.

The result of these isolated failures at earlier-built projects is that both building and regulatory practices have evolved. Projects being built today are better informed with regards to regional runoff risks. Also, while there are a handful of examples of runoff issues making the news, these are the exception and not the rule. There are over 80 projects under construction or in operations in Virginia – most never have an issue and we don't hear about them.

Would you be concerned about the water quality in your well?

We are not aware of any cases of solar projects impacting water wells, nor are we aware of any scientific reason why this would be a concern.

Would you be concerned about the temperature increase around your property?

This appears to be reference to the "solar heat island" effect which was a concern circulated several years ago when utility scale solar was much less prevalent. Research supporting this theory was based primarily on rooftop solar or extremely large, theoretical sites built in deserts. Experience has shown us that sites, such our proposed Nottoway site, do not pose any risk of elevating the heat in the vicinity of the project.

Would you be concerned about the value of your property decreasing because of one of these being located next to your property?

No. When this issue has been studied, impact to neighboring land value is usually negligible and occasionally even positive - if it's well screened, many appreciate knowing they have a long-term quiet neighbor. A helpful piece by the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers:

<https://www.asfmra.org/blogs/asfmra-press/2021/02/16/solars-impact-on-land-values>