

Shared Solar Benefits Virginia's Agricultural Community

What is Shared Solar?

A solar array in a community where multiple customers can subscribe to a portion of the solar facility and receive a credit on their utility bill for their share of the power that the solar panels produce. Shared solar provides energy cost savings for:

- Farmers, renters, businesses, local communities, non-profits, and many others
- Farmers and landowners that lease their land for solar arrays.



Why do we need Shared Solar?

- Today, more than 75% of Virginia households and businesses do not have access to solar because they either rent, live in multi-tenant buildings, or have roof restrictions.
- Shared solar provides anyone who pays an electricity bill equal access to the economic benefits of solar energy without the need to install a solar system onsite.
- It expands access to solar for all, providing energy choice for customers, all while building a stronger, distributed, and more resilient electric grid.

Benefits of Shared Solar for Virginia Landowners and Farmers

Farmers, landowners, government agencies, businesses, or nonprofits who host shared solar gardens through leasing a small portion of their land or property will receive monthly payments for the lifetime of the project to host the facility while the shared solar organization builds, maintains, and subscribes the garden. Land leases typically range from \$42,000 to \$60,000 per MW with potential increases along the lifetime of the lease.

The host may also subscribe to the facility to receive savings on their energy burdens and pass on savings to their surrounding communities. Landowners are not responsible for maintaining the solar facility and do not pay taxes on the leased land.

** Video overview - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LuZlpZjmNYU&t=5s> **

Land Use Best Practices

Coalition for Community Solar Access (CCSA) members have decades of experience working with landowners and local community representatives to ensure smooth permitting, entitlement, and connection of projects to the electric grid

Developers work directly with the landowner to choose a project site that meets facility requirements while optimizing their individual land usage. Most projects are small scale- 40 acres or less. Although, there are developers who are now specializing in what is called “dual-use” which allows for crops to grow under panels or animals to graze safely beneath the arrays. Property owners receive an annual lease payment for hosting the project for the life of the project. On average, the lifespan of a project is twenty-five years.

CCSA Members are Committed to:

- Working with the landowner’s individual goals and expectations.
- Developing mutually beneficial projects for all involved.
- Mitigating impacts to the land and securing long-term value of the land, while maximizing revenue.
- Following environmental best management practices and implementing conservation techniques in consultation with landowners, and;
- Taking the responsibility of removing the installation and returning the land to its restored or improved agricultural condition.
- Securing local level environmental permitting and ensuring the facility adheres to all regulations prescribed by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality.

What CCSA Members Look for When Siting Projects:

- Siting and accessibility
- Open and clear space
- Contiguous space
- Interconnection points
- Environmental and community considerations
- Size
- Topography

CCSA recommends landowners obtain legal counsel for contract negotiations