

## **Policy:**

### **Large Solar Energy Facility**

Rockingham County is the top agricultural producer in Virginia and serves an international market. The County is also recognized as a premier tourist destination. The Board of Supervisors will show preference to the location of solar facilities in non-agricultural areas of the County to encourage the preservation and proper use of land to ensure a readily available source of agricultural, horticultural, and forestal products and open space.

#### **Dual Use**

Preference will be given to sites showing a dual use of the land, such as for grazing or crops and solar facilities, or parking lots and solar facilities.

#### **Impervious Surfaces**

The County encourages locating facilities on impervious surfaces in areas already developed with commercial, apartment, and industrial land uses.

#### **Maximum Height**

The County encourages developers to keep all parts of a Large Solar Energy Facility as close to the ground as possible, taking into account best engineering practices and possible dual use of the land. The Board of Supervisors will not look favorably upon any part of a Large Solar Energy Facility rising higher than 15 feet above the ground unless, after careful consideration on a case-by-case basis, exceeding 15 feet would better accommodate a dual use of land or other unique site characteristics.

The Board may reference the Virginia Natural Heritage Data Explorer's and ConserveVirginia's future GIS data layers to identify possible sensitive areas.

#### **Ground Cover**

The solar facility operator or landowner should consult the Virginia Pollinator Smart Program, and work with the County during the site plan development phase to determine the best options.

#### **Historic Sites**

A facility may be considered on a property within the Study Area as designated in the Cross Keys and Port Republic Battlefields Preservation Plan, so long as impacts to the battlefield commemoration that are deemed significant by the Board are mitigated to the Board's satisfaction.

The County discourages large-scale solar facilities in the near vicinity of any recognized historic resource. However, any facility adjoining a significant "Historic Resource," as designated in the

Comprehensive Plan or as defined by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources shall have a vegetated buffer, and any facility in the near vicinity may be required to have a vegetated buffer.

**Soils and Tree Cover**

The County discourages locating solar facilities on any A-1- or A-2-zoned land that contain Prime Soils and Soils of Statewide Importance, and on wooded sites.