



Catoctin News

Newsletter of the Catoctin Group serving
Carroll and Frederick Counties

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Solar Justice

By Carolyn Ricketts*

Solar Energy Is Not New, Not Revolutionary, Not Radical; Community Solar Is!



Prehistoric humans harnessed the power of the sun to dry their clothing and hides, to preserve foods and herbs, as well as warm themselves. Ancient cultures revered the Sun as the most powerful element in their world. Egyptians, Romans, Native Americans and Chinese designed their homes to capture the warmth of the sun and store that energy to keep them warm throughout the night.

The idea of converting the energy from our star into electricity is also not a new concept. Solar electricity has existed for decades, but until the last few years, mostly large industries or those with resources and rooftop area to install solar panels have enjoyed its benefits.

Community Solar is a Game Changer

Along with a handful of other states, Maryland has led the charge in making the power of the sun available to everyone, especially marginalized communities who have been most adversely affected by fossil fuels.

It is unfair that those least responsible for the climate problem are hardest hit by the results.

A recent NPR report (<https://www.npr.org/2019/09/03/754044732/as-rising-heat-bakes-u-s-cities-the-poor-often-feel-it-most>) shows that across

Baltimore, the hottest areas tend to be less wealthy, a pattern repeated in dozens of major US cities. From 2013 to 2018, Medicaid patients in Baltimore's hottest areas visited the hospital at higher rates than Medicaid patients in the city's coolest areas. As the climate crisis continues, residents in less wealthy areas will only be exposed to greater temperature fluctuations and health risks.

Pilot Program

The Community Solar Pilot Program (<https://www.psc.state.md.us/electricity/community-solar-pilot-program/>), overseen by the Maryland Public Service Commission, assures financial benefits are available in Community Solar Developments for low and moderate income (LMI) households. More than 25% of the clean power generated by community solar projects is earmarked for the LMI population. Based on a sliding scale, LMI subscribers can receive up to a 30% discount, in some areas, below Potomac Edison First Energy (PEFE) standard rates, and a 20% discount below PEFE in other areas. Even those who do not qualify for LMI discounts are guaranteed a savings of 10%.

There are two Subscriber Organizations that provide consumer access to Community Solar in Frederick County: Neighborhood Sun and Common Energy. Much more information is available on their websites:

<https://neighborhoodsun.solar/>, Carolyn E. Ricketts, Director of Partnerships, 410-956-0382,
or carolyn@neighborhoodsun.solar

<https://my.commonenergy.us/onboarding/step2?next=true>, Maxwell Neely, 301-265-5070,
or hello@Frederick.energy

***Carolyn Ricketts** is a lifelong environmental activist, a Master Watershed Steward, a charter member of the Climate Stewards of Greater Annapolis, and worked for CBF.

12 Major Cities Pledge Fossil Fuel Divestment

Note: The following is excerpted from *Smart Cities Dive* article
by Kristin Musulin, September 22, 2020.

For link to full article, click here: ["Cities Pledge"](#)

Dive Brief:

- The mayors of 12 major cities around the globe have pledged to divest from fossil fuel companies in an effort to further support a green and sustainable COVID-19 recovery.
- The C40 Cities-backed declaration, unveiled at a virtual Climate Week NYC event Tuesday, calls on signatories to commit to divesting all city assets and pension funds from fossil fuel companies; increasing financial investments in climate solutions; and advocating for fossil-free finance from other investors.
- The signatories include mayors of Los Angeles, New Orleans, New York and Pittsburgh, along with leaders of eight international cities including London and Oslo.

Dive Insight:

In the wake of COVID-19, many cities have doubled down on efforts to pursue a resilient, low-carbon recovery from the pandemic.

In January 2018, New York Mayor Bill de Blasio announced a commitment to divest its pension funds from fossil fuel companies in five years. The city is on track to meet that commitment, said New York's Chief Climate Policy Advisor Dan Zarrilli.

"It was clear we were making all of these investments in electric vehicles, renewable energy, and other things, that if still invested in fossil fuels, we're ... betting against ourselves," Zarrilli said, noting the city is also working to invest \$4 billion in climate solutions by 2021.

To assist in this work, C40 Cities and the World Resources Institute recently shared a report detailing seven investment priorities for a green recovery: <https://www.smartcitiesdive.com/news/-investment-priorities-green-covid-19-recovery-report/585090/>



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<http://www.sierraclub.org/maryland/catoctin-group>



SIERRA CLUB



The Menace of Single-use Plastic

By Kerri Hesley

*Now is the time for us to speak up.
Our community and our world cannot and should not continue
to drown in a substance that literally is used for minutes.*

The recent passage of the Climate Emergency Resolution by the city of Frederick and Frederick County is an encouraging sign for our community. It says that leaders in our community are taking the science and the reality of climate change seriously. Thank you to all of the members in the Sierra Club Catoclin Group who worked tirelessly to have it passed. I believe it is now time to encourage our municipalities to continue in their environmental path and take up the issue of single use plastic in our county.

History & Impact

Plastic has been around since the 1950's. Its invention was revolutionary; the material was inexpensive and durable. Single-use plastic (plastic that is designed to be used for a few minutes, then left for hundreds of years on the planet) however, is a relatively recent phenomenon. According to an article in *The Atlantic* in 2017, half of all the plastic ever made has been manufactured in the last 10 years. And it keeps on growing. A survey in 2018 by Ocean Conservancy noted the top 10 items that polluted the oceans were all plastic. One of the worst offenders is plastic bags. These lightweight bags are easily blown away, littering our landscape, our rivers, our beaches, our oceans. The bags are not accepted for single stream recycling because they gum up the recycling sorters, requiring expensive shutdowns to clean them out. Issues also exist with lightweight cups and food containers, as well as straws, stirrers, and plastic cutlery. These items are predominantly made of polystyrene which is not recyclable.

One of the top contributors to plastic waste are plastic bottles. Although recyclable, only about 30% are recycled (mostly in states with bottle bills) with the rest littering the land/sea or sent to landfills. In addition, bottled water requires 2000 times the amount of energy to process compared to tap water!

Time to Act

While of course we in Frederick County cannot significantly impact the amount of waste in the oceans alone, we can certainly reduce the amount of litter generated in our county and thereby reduce our contribution to plastic pollution inland and on our Chesapeake and Atlantic shores. We in the Sierra Club Catoclin Group need to make a stand on this environmental disaster. While some issues are likely to be taken up by

the state legislature, there is no guarantee, as we have seen this past year, that they will pass. Measures that need to be enacted by our county include a ban on plastic grocery bags, as well as plastic straws and stirrers. We need to consider a ban on #6 polystyrene and other nonrecyclable clamshell containers and cups. Our representatives must voice our support for a state or regional bottle bill, as well as a national extended producer responsibility bill.

Now is the time for us to speak up. Our community and our world cannot and should not continue to drown in a substance that literally is used for minutes.



Image: Baltimore Beyond Plastic
<http://www.bmorebeyondplastic.org/problems.html>

Did You Know...

By Kerri Hesley

Maryland lawmakers did a great service by passing this law. Let's help our community become aware of it and encourage its implementation.

Effective October 1, 2020, expanded polystyrene foam (EPS) food service products, commonly called Styrofoam, are now banned in the state of Maryland. EPS is one of the worst environmental offenders in the world of plastic. It is extremely light and thus blows away easily. It breaks down into small beads which eventually break into micro plastics. It is essentially unrecyclable.

Originally scheduled for July 1, Gov. Hogan extended the deadline to allow restaurants and schools to use up their supply, because of the pandemic. A ban on the sale of EPS plates, cups and other food service items by retail stores has been in effect since July 1, 2020.

If you see a retail establishment such as a grocery store selling these items or a restaurant placing food for carryout in them, please gently inform them of the law; many may not know. Below is a link to a FAQ document from the Maryland Department of Environment.

Feel free to print a few to share. If an establishment has questions, it can contact the Health Department at:

bglotfelty@FrederickCountyMD.gov or 301-600-3179.

Maryland lawmakers did a great service by passing this law. Let's help our community become aware of it and encourage its implementation.



Maryland
Department of
the Environment

Maryland's Ban on EPS Food Service Containers pdf Link:

[EPS Ban What You Need to Know](#)

Photo: Green Ubuntu

**A NATION THAT
DESTROYS ITS SOILS
DESTROYS ITSELF.
FORESTS ARE THE LUNGS
OF OUR LAND, PURIFYING
THE AIR AND GIVING
FRESH STRENGTH TO
OUR PEOPLE.
— FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT**

Solar Generation Facilities - Pollinator-Friendly Designation



The Pollinator-Friendly Designation Program (bill **SB 1158**) was signed by Governor Larry Hogan in May 2017. SB 1158 established a pollinator-friendly designation program for commercial ground mounted solar facilities. The Bill led to the drafting of a Pollinator Certification Regulation that was finalized in March 2020.

Final Pollinator Certification Regulation

The regulation established a procedure for solar developers to follow in order to be certified as pollinator-friendly solar facility. To summarize, a developer must:

- Submit an application provided by the Power Plant Research Program to pprp@maryland.gov with a notification of an intent to apply for the designation to include:
 - Name of the facility
 - Location of the facility
 - Is this a proposed or existing facility?
 - Facility tax map information (map, grid, parcel number, etc.) and acreage
 - Contact name, email address, and phone number
 - Short description of the facility
- Include a pollinator habitat management plan with application submittal
- Utilize a [seed mix appropriate for the Maryland region](#). For suggestions regarding seed mix suppliers, click here
- Undergo a site inspection and review of the pollinator habitat management plan by a [DNR-approved site inspector](#). A list of approved site inspectors is here.
- Submit a final [Solar Site Pollinator Habitat Planning and Assessment Scorecard](#), along with a final pollinator habitat management plan, and a letter from the site inspector stating that the site has been planted and managed in accordance with the habitat plan to DNR for review, within 30 days of completion of the site inspection.
- Note that the site must be planted and managed prior to the certification.

The Department may request additional information related to the application; the applicant shall submit the requested information to the Department within 30 days of the Department's request. Failure to submit the additional information within 30 days of the Department's request shall result in termination of the application.

Upon approval, the pollinator-friendly certification will be valid for a period of two years, upon which the developer can apply for a renewal by contacting PPRP within 90 days of the expiration of the certification.

News

Perdue Farms in Salisbury, Maryland was granted the first Pollinator-Friendly Solar Facility Designation on June 25, 2020. For the press release and additional photos, [click here](#).

This paper was prepared by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources:

Website: <https://dnr.maryland.gov/pprp/Pages/pollinator.aspx>

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Fort Detrick Area B: Contamination Remediation and a Road

By Jennifer Kunze

Fort Detrick's Area B has been an environmental hazard in Frederick for decades. The site has been used at various times as a proving ground for biological warfare testing, a disposal area for chemical, biological, and radiological material, and now for ongoing landfill facilities and other military activities. Area B has been on the National Priorities List of the Superfund program since 2009, due to contamination moving from buried hazardous waste into groundwater. ([Read more about Area B here.](#))

Efforts to remediate this contaminated groundwater flow are complex and ongoing, currently focusing on identifying the best technological strategy for minimizing contamination moving from the groundwater on site into Carroll Creek. ([Read about the start of the current pilot study testing three remediation technologies here.](#)) It will be years before the process of remediating this moving contamination is concluded, and the final shape of the remedy may not be known for years. Meanwhile, Frederick City has continued to grow around Area B, and the city's 2020 Comprehensive Plan outlines some of the ways that growth will continue in the next decade. Elevating protections for public health is critically important, particularly with the plan's current emphasis on building a high-speed roadway through the site. The City has planned for years to extend Christopher's Crossing south from Whittier to connect with the Golden Mile, straight through Area B and curving in between several of the historical hazardous waste disposal sites near the intersection of Kemp Lane and Shookstown Road.



Roadway construction and the continued traffic through the site afterwards has the potential to cause a lot of significant problems: from accidentally disturbing buried hazardous waste or contaminated soil, to the impervious surface changing the way stormwater and groundwater flows through the site (which could change or increase the movement of hazardous materials through groundwater), to even the potential for a serious car crash that could disturb the caps covering the nearby landfills.

Building this road, however, is not assured. The military may not grant the city access to the land for the project. Additionally, any decision might be delayed until a final remediation technology is selected. Despite these unknowns, though, the latest draft of the Comprehensive Plan says that "The City should remain focused on construction projects that support this system, including the Fort Detrick

Area B for the Christopher's Crossing leg" ([the whole draft plan can be downloaded here](#)).

To protect public safety and health, the City's 2020 Comprehensive Plan should consider alternatives to constructing a segment of Christopher's Crossing through Area B. The next few months will determine what the Plan ultimately says. The city's Planning Commission has been reviewing the Plan ([watch a recording of their most recent workshop here](#)), and will make a new draft available for public comment and a public hearing soon. The Board of Aldermen will also review it before it becomes final.

To connect with the process and stay up to date, contact Jennifer Kunze, Maryland Program Manager at Clean Water Action, at jkunze@cleanwater.org.

BREAKING NEWS

Betty Law, P.E.

Frederick City is finalizing its draft of its 2020 Comprehensive Plan. At the Sept. 28 Special Planning Workshop, Alderwoman Kelly Russell directed the planning staff to look into an alternate route for the loop road that would bypass Ft. Detrick.

This is a breakthrough and a first step. It came after a small group of concerned citizens who are members of the Ft. Detrick Restoration Advisory Board and Cleanwater Action have been presenting at planning workshops since February. There is a long way to go before the City makes a commitment to reroute the loop road. I have been asking members of the Sierra Club Catocin Group to write a short thank you email to Alderman Kelly Russell for directing the city's planning

staff to look into an alternative for the loop road to bypass Ft. Detrick. The more people we have commenting on this, the more likely the planners are to take the issue seriously. It would be helpful if you mention that you heard this at the Sierra Club meeting. Mention my name if you wish. The idea is to voice your concern over the environmental risks of a road through a Superfund Site with known contaminated ground water.

You can write Alderman Kelly Russell at krussell@cityoffrederickmd.gov.

Her official information: Alderman Kelly Russell, President Pro Tem, The City of Frederick, 101 N. Court Street, Frederick, MD 21701 301-600-2966, www.cityoffrederickmd.gov