



Arlington's General Assembly Ask

In late 2018, the Mount Vernon Group Executive Committee sent the letter below to the Arlington County Board concerning Arlington's 2019 General Assembly legislative package:

Arlington has long been a leader in taking environmentally responsible actions at the County level and supporting state-wide issues such as net metering expansion and a Virginia Renewable Portfolio Standard. The 2019 General Assembly session will again provide initiatives that will have the potential to benefit our environment as well as our bottom line. One of the most critical will be the "Solar Freedom" bill that Delegate Mark Keam and Senator Jennifer McClellan will sponsor. Both the City of Falls Church and Fairfax County are supporting the bill and its eight elements:

1. Allowing local governments to install solar facilities of up to 5 MW on government-owned property and use the electricity for schools or other government-owned buildings located on nearby property, even if not contiguous.
2. Allowing homeowners to install a net-metered solar facility to meet future demand. Current law restricts the size of the solar facility to the amount of energy used in the previous 12 months.
3. Allowing homeowners (and other customers) to attribute energy from a single solar array to meters on other buildings on the same property or adjacent property owned by the homeowner (or customer).
4. Allowing the owner of a multi-family residential building to install a solar facility on the building or surrounding property and sell the electricity to tenants.
5. Raising the size cap for net metered non-residential solar facilities from 1 MW to 2 MW
6. Removing standby charges on residential facilities sized between 10-20 KW.
7. Making third-party financing using power purchase agreements (PPAs) legal for homeowners, businesses, and local governments.
8. Lifting the 1% cap on the total amount of solar that can be net metered in a utility territory.

The legislation will have additional significance for Arlington as we look to update our Community Energy Plan (CEP). The bill provides tools that will be critical to moving forward to accomplish CEP goals. It also has never been more evident that we all must address climate change. A commitment to renewable energy is a major action we can make to reduce emissions. Taking effective steps is not going to occur at the Federal level so we must focus on the state and local jurisdiction actions. The Virginia General Assembly has not led the way, but

the 2017 election gave us hope that change was possible and environmental progress might be made. Progress cannot occur without legislation that will provide the laws to make it possible AND without jurisdictions promoting the elements needed in those laws.

Arlington needs to continue to lead, not just to achieve CEP goals, but to benefit our community economically with cheaper energy options. Include all eight elements listed above in your legislative ask (only three appear in the draft version) and support the tools needed to advance the CEP goals and make a strong statement that Arlington acts to mitigate climate change.

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