

Landowner Advocacy Guidance



Begin With a Friendly Approach

Not everyone you talk to will have a strong opinion about this project. Most people will not feel like they know enough about the project to have a strong opinion or participate in public debate. While most folks who oppose this project will be calm, cool, and collected in most interactions, it is often a tactic of those opposing renewable energy projects to rile up supporters and participating landowners. This is because bad behavior is far more likely to discredit supporters than to discredit opposition, especially if it's recorded. Remember to stay calm and treat everyone with the same respect you'd ask them to treat you, regardless of how they act towards you.

Do Not Be Afraid to Say, "I don't know."

It's not your job to know every detail about the project, how equipment is manufactured, etc. If you don't know or aren't sure, it's always better to say you don't know and see if you or someone from the project team can follow up. Often, what is being repeated by folks on the ground is deliberate misinformation shared by others with a vested interest in preventing renewable energy projects from being built. They might not know anything about what they're saying besides someone they trust shared it with them.

Lean On Your 'Why'

Before talking with your neighbors about the project, think about why you support this project and why you signed on to have part of it built on your land. Whether it's extra income that will help your family farm, your fundamental belief in renewable energy, or because you believe it can help your community, telling that story can help others come along with you. Because mis- and disinformation can be very compelling, those who believe it can be confused about why someone would sign up to participate in a project. More often than not, the best response to this confusion is telling your personal story.

Above All Else, Remember This

You are not required to participate in the conversation. Nobody is forcing you to respond to a comment on Facebook or to someone in public. Sometimes the easiest and best thing to do is say you aren't interested in the conversation at this time and remove yourself from it.

Other Tips & Considerations

- **Find common ground and build from there.**
- **Stick to the facts - and the facts that you know.**
- **The most active opposition will have the strongest opinions and an agenda.**
- **Make other supporters feel welcome.**
- **Approach your neighbors and be non-judgmental.**
- **Only speak for yourself. Don't assume everyone has your opinion.**
- **Use 'feel, felt, found' to respond to people's concerns.**

Landowner Advocacy FAQs



Q. Do solar farms impact soil health of the land they are built on?

A. Solar farms promote healthier soil ecosystems, support sustainable land use, and coexist harmoniously with the environment while generating renewable energy, according to the American Clean Power Association. They use vegetative ground cover to stabilize soil and improve biodiversity. Additionally, the shade from solar panels helps retain soil moisture, which is beneficial in dry areas.

Source: www.cleanpower.org

Q. Do solar projects take away agricultural land from food production?

A. Contrary to popular belief, solar energy projects do not necessarily reduce the amount of land available for agriculture. There is ample land for both food production and solar energy projects. According to the Great Plains Institute for Sustainable Development, current and proposed solar projects typically use less than 0.5 percent of most county's land footprint across the U.S. Solar and agricultural land use can also harmoniously coexist with co-location options like grazing or beekeeping. These practices provide additional income for farmers and benefits for solar facilities.

Source: www.betterenergy.org

Q. How do solar projects benefit landowners and the community?

- A.** The Center for Rural Affairs lists numerous benefits that landowners and the community receive through solar projects, including:
- **Steady Income for Farmers:** Participating landowners receive lease payments for hosting solar panels, which provides a long-term reliable income stream.
 - **Tax Contributions:** Solar projects contribute to local tax revenues, which can be used to fund public services and infrastructure improvements.
 - **Job Creation:** The construction and maintenance of solar projects creates local jobs, boosting the economy and providing employment opportunities.

Source: www.CFRA.org

Q. Will solar disturb the natural wildlife in the area?

A. Solar projects can positively impact wildlife by reducing farming activity and chemical use, leading to increased biodiversity. Argonne National Laboratory states that solar energy also improves air quality, reduces water usage in energy production, and supports pollination and stormwater management. Developers often include wildlife corridors in their site designs to facilitate the easy movement of animals through and around the project.

Source: www.anl.gov



Landowner Advocacy FAQs



Q. Is solar energy subsidized with tax money?

A. Yes, like all other energy sources in the United States, solar energy projects receive subsidies. These federal incentives promote a diverse energy portfolio and encourage investment in energy independence. A 2024 report from Lazard states that while subsidies help reduce costs, solar energy remains one of the most cost-effective and efficient forms of energy even without them.

Source1: www.renewableenergyworld.com **Source2:** www.lazard.com

Q. Is solar a cost-effective energy source?

A. Yes, renewable energy sources, particularly solar and wind, are currently the most cost-effective forms of energy production in the United States, according to Lazard's 2023 Levelized Cost of Energy Analysis. Advancements in technology and increased production scale have significantly reduced solar energy costs, making it an affordable and sustainable option for electricity generation.

Source1: www.lazard.com **Source2:** www.decarbonization.visualcapitalist.com

Q. What happens at the end of the solar project's lifespan?

A. Solar projects generally operate for 30 to 40 years. After that time period, the site can be repowered by upgrading certain components, or decommissioned. Decommissioning plans, outlined in lease agreements, include the removal of the solar installations, vegetation reseeding, and drainage system repair to ensure the land is agriculturally viable for future generations. Importantly, decommissioning costs are covered by the project owner, not local governments or residents, typically through a bond. A report from the EPA states that solar panels themselves, composed mostly of silicon, glass, and aluminum, are 95% recyclable. The rare earth elements contained within solar panels may also be recycled. Recycling or repurposing materials is also financially beneficial by avoiding landfill disposal.

Source: www.epa.gov

