

MCPB 6/26/25 - Item 10
Correspondence

From: [REDACTED]
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Re: Mountain Vale Solar Mandatory Referral Plan/Forest Conservation Plan: June 26, 2025 meeting
Date: Tuesday, June 17, 2025 7:28:37 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Mr. Harris,

Although you may have seen this, I'm attaching it just in case. Were the solar panels to affect the well water of the community of Barnesville, the high costs of adding the town to MoCo sewer/water would warrant real caution in allowing this form of "green power."

Many thanks,
[REDACTED]

<https://www.mackinac.org/blog/2022/bright-panels-dark-secrets-the-problem-of-solar-waste#:~:text=In%20fact%2C%20solar%20produces%20300,expanded%20use%20of%20nuclear%20energy.>

On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 11:49 AM MJO <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Dear Mr. Harris,

I am writing to you in opposition to the proposed **Mountain Vale Solar project** on Barnesville Road, in Boyds.

I live just over the municipal line, in Barnesville. My wife and I have lived in MoCo since 1988. I am a teacher and she is a librarian in Fairfax County. I was recently elected to be a Commissioner in Barnesville's town government. My opinions about this project are strictly my own.

I oppose the project for the following reasons:

1. The construction of this site will go directly against the one of the core reasons for the creation of the Ag-Reserve in 1970: to preserve "a rural way of life" for the country as a whole. Barnesville Road has--right now--beautiful fields that have been farmed literally for centuries. Solar panels will destroy this precious heritage.
2. The construction of this site is almost unanimously opposed by the local community.
3. Last year, the solar company hosted a Zoom meeting with their lawyer and reps from the company. There were about 30-45 locals--including me--on the Zoom call. The pain and dismay of the citizens of this community were palpable. Reassurances that the water tables would not be affected; that home prices would not be affected; that wildlife would not be affected, etc. were all given by the reps from the company--ALL of them citing studies funded by their COMPANY. Meaning their worth was near zero.

I respectfully ask you to not allow this project to go forward. Any solar site in the Ag-Reserve should be located out of sight from a roadway. While I respect a landowner's right to develop his or her property according to their interests, those interests are not absolute, but should be weighed by, and if needed, be restricted in service to the common good of the community. Preserving the road ways and rural views of the Ag-Reserve should be a paramount concern for MoCo, and so I ask you to deny the development of this project and others similar to it.

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]
17925 Barnesville Road
Barnesville MD 20838
[REDACTED]

June 23, 2025

Montgomery County Planning Board
Regarding Agenda for Meeting Scheduled for June 26, 2025
Item 10
Mountain Vale Solar Conditional Use Application
No. CU202507
And Forest Conservation Plan No. F20250530

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board:

I am a resident of the Town of Barnesville as well as an adjacent landowner of the proposed Solar Farm. As a resident of the Town of Barnesville, I object to the construction of solar panels on an 11.25-acre tract immediately outside the boundaries of a quaint municipality that just celebrated its 275th anniversary. While the applicant indicates they will plant trees to screen the panels from view I wonder, as I climb the hill approaching the town, what size trees will they plant that will obscure the view of approximately 8 acres of 7-foot metal panels? How long will it take before the vegetation shields people from the view? In addition to a size requirement, should there also be a requirement for a certain number of evergreen trees?

As the owner of the adjacent 21715 Beallsville Road, I object to the proposed solar farm primarily for environmental reasons. Our property has a small pond that is adjacent to the entire 109-acre tract of land. It is enjoyed by us and many of our friends and neighbors as a place to walk, birdwatch, or just sit and watch the waterfowl. Anecdotally, a bald eagle has been spotted flying over the pond. Neighborhood children fish in the pond with their fathers (they throw the fish back). Several turtles make the pond their home as they make their way from a neighboring pond on the other side of Beallsville Road. Are there other animals whose migration from the pond on Conoy Road to our pond may be impeded by this development? I wonder what effect the solar farm will have on the continued enjoyment of the pond.

1. What effect will debris and run-off from the panels affect the pond? There are a few ephemeral streams and tributaries that link the two properties, and I worry about the effect on the aquatic life.
2. I have read that the inverters create noise. Will that sound contribute to the habitat destruction of birds such as meadowlarks?
3. The Forest Conservation Plan appears to show creating Category I Conservation Area only on 2.25 acres of forest on the 11.25 acres of solar farm. I am concerned that the wooded area next to our property and our pond is not being protected as a Forest Conservation Area. There currently is a Forest Conservation area on our property and a neighboring property that is adjacent to the 109-acre parcel so it would make sense to continue that designation on the

wooded land immediately adjacent to our property. I fear that without any protection, that wooded area can disappear, and we will see the ugly panels from my beautiful property.

Thank you for considering these points that I have made. My phone number is 301-915-7977 and my mailing address is Holly Larisch, Post Office Box 93, Barnesville, MD 20838.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

21830 Beallsville Road and 21715 Beallsville Road