

Montgomery Countryside Alliance

Position Statement: Renewable Energy and Climate Change Response

3/9/19

Montgomery Countryside Alliance (MCA) is deeply committed to science-based collaboration with private, non-profit, and public stakeholders to work toward an effective local and regional climate change response. These multipronged, climate change endeavors include supporting the County's Zero Waste Initiative, nurturing regenerative and sustainable agriculture, promoting sound transportation solutions, advancing carbon sequestering afforestation and reforestation projects in the Agricultural Reserve and rural buffer areas. We consider all these activities critical to our mission, which is focused on protecting our farmland and open space to support food security for the entire Washington DC region.

We have already established contact and meetings with our new County Executive, the director of Department of Environment, over two dozen County-wide environmental and civic leaders, and the County's Planning Department to lay the groundwork for our stated endeavors. These and other related initiatives would ably serve Montgomery County's goal of zero carbon emissions by 2035 as well as meet the critical mandates for food security, water quality and natural resource protection, a strong diversified and equitable economy, and wise stewardship of tax dollars.

MCA supports:

- The advancement of a renewable energy plan, including the installation of commercial solar facilities, that is based on demonstrable data that will guide the siting of such commercial facilities on existing impervious surfaces, industrial sites, structures, and in all new construction. Projects designed to abate climate change are many and varied, with some making large impacts and others making lessor, incremental impacts. New projects should address situations where climate change is being exacerbated, rather than displacing existing efforts that are already making at least incremental positive progress.
- The implementation of an incentive based program for renewable energy facilities, as modeled elsewhere, [e.g. [Boston's Climate Change Response Plan](#)] that seek to attain our carbon zero objective without undermining the County's longstanding preservation plans.
- Full consideration of actions pertaining to the County's climate change initiatives that support and maintain the stated goals of the Agricultural Reserve, a nationally recognized model of open space and agricultural preservation. Agriculture & Rural Open Space (AROS) master plan and the emerging climate change response plan are completely interdependent.