

Good morning,

Chaberton did reach out to our office and we did meet with them on November 8, 2024.

During that meeting we discussed what the agricultural community thought of agrivoltaics.

We shared many items from the agricultural community's perspective including but not limited to:

Ag has been asked to help solve many environmental issues in Maryland and this feels like yet another item where it is easier to look at ag land to solve a problem not created by farmers,

Agrivoltaics is untested in this area and the ag school, UMD, has made no recommendations on how to operate in an agrivoltaics setting,

There are many rooftops, schools, parking lots, government buildings down county that could be covered in solar before looking to ag land,

Since there are many factors creating situations where farmland is lost – saltwater intrusion, development, climate change, shouldn't the current ag land be protected so food can be grown?,

What happens to an end-of-life solar project? No one knows what the long-term impact to the soil is and what decommissioning will look like or if it will occur,

The logistics of farming in and around solar panels will create unique and unknown challenges,

The ag community feels as though the statement of agrivoltaics not taking away productive land is a bait and switch comment – most of the farmland that could have community solar located on it will be commodity farmed, the commodity farmers are not going to get into table food production or sheep grazing as their business model, so the current farmer will most likely be replaced to find someone whose operation may be able to fit into an agrivoltaics model.

We recommended that if Chaberton was serious about agrivoltaics to have the area in the solar installation available to new and beginning farmers looking for access to land, to set up the area as a type of incubator farm.

Our office never approved of any plans, we never supported the project, we talked with them as they were instructed to contact us.

We did not draft the RFP, we did not sign off on any proposed ideas they put forward.

Please let me know if you have questions.

Thank you,

Mike

Mike Scheffel

Director, Office of Agricultural Services