

I am writing to follow up on my testimony delivered to the Senate Act Committee yesterday. I wanted to provide a brief update on the solar array that I mentioned during my testimony, which was leased to a solar developer by my neighbor. Unfortunately, the array has been covered in snow since November and has suffered significant damage due to high winds, resulting in smashed and broken panels. Notably, this solar array is located on a lot neighboring the proposed Shaftsbury Solar site, and as such, is subject to the same snow load and high wind conditions that affect this area.

I believe this is relevant to the committee's consideration of S.323, as it illustrates that the large solar developers are choosing sites solely for their economic profitability, not for their suitability for the infrastructure.

I also wanted to address a point made by Ben Shapiro from VPIRG during his testimony, which suggested that limiting solar array development to five acres would not lead to less conversion of farmland to solar, but only lead to fragmented and less efficient development.

I respectfully disagree with this assessment. Smaller, decentralized solar developments may be more expensive to implement, but I believe that this approach can also lead to more resilient and community-driven development. "Inexpensive development" for the large developers is hugely expensive for Vermonters in food security, natural resources, and resilience.

The five acre ceiling for solar development on PAS would change the economics for large-scale developers and make other places more attractive, saving our Vermont resources from this land grab.

Finally, our state's prime ag soils are growing in global importance due to the degradation and drying of soils around the world. With many regions, including the Middle East and the American Midwest, struggling with water scarcity, and other areas like California facing severe drought, Vermont's soils are more valuable than ever. Our state's unique combination of fertile soils and abundant water resources makes our agricultural land a precious resource that deserves protection and conservation.

I hope that this information is helpful as the committee continues to consider the issues that I testified about yesterday. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions or need additional information. Thank you for your time and consideration.