

## Phoenixville Area Clean Energy Alliance - PACEA

On March 24th the biweekly meeting of the Phoenixville Area and Clean Energy Alliance (PECEA) discussed the draft Chester County Climate Action Plan (CAP). See Agenda attached. The following comments were agreed upon and approved to be conveyed to Chester County Planning Commission and Energy and Advisory Board

1. PACEA highly recommends the creation of a Climate Action Office. All agreed that a specific governmental agency climate action plan will be required to implement the CAP, especially govern the significant effort that will be required to support community engagement and action. It was suggested that the Office be staffed with an individual with broad climate change credentials and significant technical and personnel capacities to communicate digitally. Technical expertise is less important than leadership skills with the ability to generate interest, set priorities and connect initiatives to create effective change. The individual should be well equipped to create content, resources and manage engagement with communities.
2. PACEA unanimously supports the expansion of the Vision Planning Partnership Grant Program planning grants and community engagement funding for clean energy transition and climate change resilience planning.
3. PACEA recently started a working group focused on improving solar ordinances, permitting and inspection in our six municipality group. Our survey of these municipalities showed a wide range of ordinance restrictions from none to very restrictive.

**Ordinances.** East Pikeland has a draft ordinance which very well developed and is pending approval based on potential progress and refinement if the Vision Planning Partnership provides analysis resources and increased discussion. Of particular note are elements which develop parameters associated with community solar. PACEA request the CAP action to have the promptly have the Chester County Planning Commission develop a model ordinance:

- Standardize the definitions associated with solar installations.
- Develop a framework for community solar that allows for flexibility in the size and placement of solar installations providing co-beneficial incentives such as tree planting, buffering, regenerative agriculture and biodiversity habitat restoration and pollinator habitat and maintenance design and agreements.

**Permitting** The Philadelphia Solar Energy Association (PSEA) has joined PACEA in our efforts to improve solar permitting utilizing the SolarAPP. PSEA recently was awarded a grant to participate in promoting the adoption of this instant online solar permitting platform for code compliant residential systems. PSEA is advocated thru the PA DEP that RGGI funds be applied as an incentive for community grants to municipalities that practice best practices, such as use of the SolarAPP. PACEA recommends that actions be taken to engage PSEA as part of the development of the model ordinance development.

PACEA is a distributed campaign, working to support community volunteers and local leaders who work in their own township, city or borough pursuing equity through transition to 100% clean renewable energy. Local government leadership is essential. The core members of the Alliance are the six (6) municipalities who participate in the Phoenixville Regional Planning Committee (PRPC). See Attached the PACEA Vision and Purpose Summary and Membership list.

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