

Support: HB 508 / SB 340

Small renewable energy projects; agrivoltaics definition, stakeholder group report.

Sponsor(s):

- Del. John McAuliff (D, Fauquier, Loudoun)
- Sen. Russet Perry (D, Fauquier, Loudoun)

Key issue(s):

- Agriculture
- Renewable energy

What this bill does:

Defines agrivoltaics for the purposes of the stakeholder group

- The bill defines "agrivoltaics," as it pertains to small renewable energy projects, as "the intentional co-location of agricultural production and solar energy generation on the same land that:
 - (i) is designed to prioritize and sustain agricultural productivity while integrating renewable energy;
 - (ii) allows the ongoing production and sale of agricultural products throughout the solar array's life;
 - (iii) is a part of an existing farm business; and (iv) ensures flexibility for farmers to adapt to market conditions and support operational needs." "Agrivoltaics" does not include solar energy generation that replaces the farmer's primary income.

Convenes an agrivoltaics project advisory panel

- The bill "directs the Virginia Cooperative Extension, in consultation with the Department of Energy, to convene a stakeholder advisory panel to develop recommendations to (i) establish criteria to determine qualifying agrivoltaic projects that are eligible for grant funding through the Virginia Power Innovation Fund and Program, (ii) identify how to monitor and sustain the integrity of agrivoltaic projects, and (iii) consider permitting or provide other incentives that may be effective in promoting agrivoltaic projects in the Commonwealth." The bill directs the stakeholder advisory panel to submit a report on its recommendations to the Secretaries of Agriculture and Forestry; Natural and Historic Resources; and Commerce and Trade by November 1, 2026.

Why you should support this bill:

- As Virginia scrambles to find solutions to meet the growing energy demand being driven by the explosion of data centers, leading to escalating utility bills and increased potential for recurring blackouts, agrivoltaics offers a path forward that both farmers and rural communities can get behind.
- PEC supports distributed energy solutions such as agrivoltaics, which keeps farmland in production while allowing farmers to save on utility bills and add revenue streams, and respects and preserves this region's important natural resources and rural economy.

 pecva.org/agrivoltaics



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