

Statements of SOLAR regarding Alameda County Solar Policy

1. Alameda County contains a treasure of open space lands rich with natural resources for agriculture, biological habitat, scenic views, and cultural heritage.
2. In 2000, the voters of Alameda County made a commitment to protect open space and agricultural land by approving Measure D. Measure D was specifically written to protect open lands from “excessive, badly-located and harmful development.” This protection resonates with agriculturalists, ranchers, environmentalists, and the general public.
3. Current utility-scale Solar Energy Facility (SEF) applications in the Mountain House area would remove 50% of the remaining prime agricultural land in Alameda County from production (approximately 2000 acres would be developed out of 4000 acres that remain).
4. Raptors use these agricultural lands for foraging. Removal of these important feeding grounds will push raptors upslope and into the Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area where raptor deaths from wind turbines can be expected to increase. This effect will complicate scientific studies now underway to determine whether the wind turbine repowering program is effective in reducing raptor mortality.
5. If the county’s proposed solar policies are adopted, all of North Livermore could be covered with solar arrays without mitigation for loss of farmland. Doolan Canyon, Collier Canyon, Sunol, the Vargas Plateau and other important sites could be affected.
6. We should be developing all urban solar sites *first* before undertaking the development of SEF on rural lands. These sites include parking lots, commercial and public buildings, residences, etc. After the opportunities for solar production in the urban areas have been exhausted, then we can think about using rural land.

Signatories: California Native Plant Society, East Bay Chapter
Friends of Livermore
Friends of the Vineyards
Citizens for Open Space in Alameda County (Measure D Committee)
Alameda Creek Alliance
Ohlone Audubon Society

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