

## Community and Utility Solar Facts

### **Will living near a solar farm affect the value of my property?**

Numerous local and national studies have shown that clean energy projects do not negatively impact nearby property values. CohnReznick accounting firm recently conducted a study of property values near solar farms in Illinois and Indiana, with participation from county assessors and local real estate professionals. This study concluded that solar farms do not adversely affect adjoining property values in either the short or long term.

### **Can solar projects be located out of sight of homes and businesses?**

When developed correctly, solar farms don't change the look or feel of a community. Although it is sometimes necessary to build within view of residences, solar arrays have a low profile of only 8-12 feet high. Landscaping can easily be used to effectively shield the projects from view.

### **I understand that solar farms make money for the companies that own them and the landowners who host them, but what do they do for the communities where they're located?**

Solar projects provide both economic and environmental benefits for nearby communities. A typical solar project will generate 30 years of steady tax revenue, funding, local schools and community services while keeping taxes low for homeowners. Solar also creates local construction and operations jobs which means increased business for nearby hotels and restaurants. Importantly, community solar projects allow local subscribers to purchase lower-cost, clean energy.

### **How much does solar power cost?**

Solar is now one of the lowest-cost ways to generate electricity<sup>1</sup>. Technological advancements have increasingly reduced solar's price in recent years, in many cases it's now cheaper than coal, gas or nuclear.

### **Does it make sense to build solar projects on farm land? Shouldn't we be concerned about taking land out of production?**

The opportunity to host a solar installation on their land allows farmers to diversify their income. With more than 27 million acres of farmland in Illinois, solar energy production will never displace agriculture's central role in our economy, landscape and culture. Many solar projects are planted with native grasses that improve soil and water quality and provide habitat for pollinators, making nearby farmland more productive.

### **What if the project is abandoned? Will the county be stuck paying to remove it?**

There are numerous protections in-place – including statewide standards developed in partnership with the Illinois Farm Bureau and the Department of Agriculture – to ensure projects are decommissioned at the end of their useful lives. Lease agreements and county solar ordinances specify a developer’s responsibility for decommissioning projects and returning land to its prior use.

### **Do solar panels contain toxic chemicals? Could solar facilities affect land or water quality for families living nearby?**

Solar panels are safe to touch, attach to your home and install in your neighborhood. Panels are primarily made of glass, aluminum, copper and other common materials found in household appliances<sup>ii</sup>. The trace amounts of chemicals in solar panels, that enable them to produce electricity, are completely sealed within the glass and coatings of the panels. Solar panels are designed to withstand severe weather and last up to 40 years. After their useful life, solar panels are easy to disassemble and recycle.

### **Do solar farms increase runoff, erosion or flooding?**

Solar farms do not increase runoff, in fact, they improve soil quality. Many projects are planted with native plants that absorb rain, improve the soil, recharge groundwater and prevent erosion. Storm water management plans are a required part of the solar development process.



View inside a solar farm (Champaign, IL)



View 100 ft outside a solar farm (Champaign, IL)

---

<sup>i</sup> Lazard Levelized Cost of Energy Analysis: <https://www.lazard.com/perspective/levelized-cost-of-energy-2017/>

<sup>ii</sup> Solar Energy Industries Association: PV Waste 101 <https://www.seia.org/research-resources/pv-waste-101>