

**COPY OF ORAL TESTIMONY TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF HOWARD COUNTY, MD, IN SUPPORT OF BILL NO. 59-2016 (ZRA-164), SEPTEMBER 19, 2016**

My name is Dennis Satnick. I am Sr. Consultant to RER Energy Group, who was recently recognized as the 28<sup>th</sup> Top 50 Solar Developer in the United States *by Solar Power World Magazine*. I wish to say a few words in support of Bill No. 59-2016, commonly referred to ZRA-164.

Before moving to MD some 4-years ago, I had both the honor and responsibility to spend 3-years as a sitting member on the PA Farmland Preservation Board. I was appointed to the Board by former Governor Edward Rendell.

I learned several things while serving on the Board. First, that the size of the average farm in MD as well as PA, DE and NJ, is less than 100 acres. Second, most farm owners do not farm their own property, they lease the land out to a tenant farmer who pay between \$200 - \$300 per acre. A quick calculation indicates income between \$20,000 - \$30,000. Not a life changing sum, but enough to temporarily round off some of life's hard edges.

A solar developer, on the other hand, will pay between \$750 - \$1,500 per acre. For the sake of an apples-to-apples comparison, a farm owner could earn between \$75,000 and \$150,000 compared to the previously mentioned \$20,000 - \$30,000. This is a life changing number and one that could possibly mean keeping one's farm to pass down to a future generation, create a legacy or help out financially when retirement will certainly will come.

I believe that amending the Howard County Zoning Ordinance to permit ground mounted solar facilities on County Preservation Parcels in the RR and RC zoning districts will help preserve the "farm family" way of life for those farm owners who face increasing financial difficulties.

Thank you.