

Submitter: D Torres  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2063

Chair & Committee Members,

I strongly OPPOSE this bill. In my opinion, there are more cleaner energy solutions than installing solar panels to farmlands and conducting studies that have already been done to show that solar energy is depleting farmlands of their rich soils.

Driven by subsidies, mandates and federal and state policies compelling the use of more renewable energy, solar energy facilities are now displacing farmland at an increasing rate. While land leases generally offer protection for landowners so that farms can be reclaimed from the solar installations, in practice damage is already being done with remediation as long as 50 years in the future. The target for solar operations is increasingly in the Midwest, where government handouts to solar allow them to pay more to rent land than the farmers providing food for the nation. Farmland preservation groups believe 83 percent of new solar installations will come from farm and ranch lands with half of these installations on the richest land for food and crops.

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Example of Damages to Cropland

In 2019, one Indiana farmer leased about 445 acres of his 1200 acre farm near Whitfield to Dunns Bridge Solar LLC for one of the largest solar developments in the Midwest. According to the solar lease, Dunns Bridge would use “commercially reasonable efforts to minimize any damage to and disturbance of growing crops and crop land caused by its construction activities” outside the project site and “not remove topsoil” from the property itself. Sub-contractors, however, graded the fields to assist in the building of roads and installation of posts and panels, despite warnings that it could make the land more vulnerable to erosion. The crews spread fine sand across large stretches of rich topsoil. Much of the land beneath the panels is now covered in yellow-brown sand, where no plants grow. The Dunns Bridge Solar project is a subsidiary of NextEra Energy Resources LLC, the world’s largest generator of renewable energy from wind and solar. According to the company, it would review any remedial work needed to the land at the end of its contract in 2073, as per the terms of the lease agreement.

**PLEASE DO NOT PASS THIS BILL!**