

## **Second solar ordinance ratified**

Supervisors concerned about projects built on prime ag land

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The sun is shining in Yolo County as the Board of Supervisors passed the second of two solar ordinances.

The board unanimously approved the large and very large solar facilities ordinance Tuesday. Large solar facilities take up more than 30 acres, up to 120 acres, which is then considered a very large facility.

Two weeks ago, the board passed the small- and medium-sized solar facilities ordinance, which applies to facilities smaller than 30 acres.

A draft solar ordinance was first brought to the board last November and has been circulating among the board throughout this year. Initially, the smaller and larger facilities ordinances were a single draft.

The large and very large facilities ordinance received unanimous approval despite concerns of new solar projects being built on prime farmland. However, as part of the ordinance, large and very large projects will have to come to the board for a use permit, rather than just going to the Planning Commission.

In addition, larger projects would be mitigated for the number of acres that will be taken out for a solar project. This would especially be important in cases where prime farmland might be used.

"I agree it's a reasonable compromise," said Supervisor Jim Provenza. "... We are stewards of the land. We have precious prime farmland in the county."

Supervisor Duane Chamberlain also raised concerns about prime farmland but said he liked the way the ordinance was presented. However, it could be different when a large or very large project comes to the board.

"I will vote against anything on prime farmland," he said.

Chamberlain quoted former supervisor and current state Sen. Lois Wolk, D-Davis, in regards to prime farmland. She said it was "unthinkable" to "sacrifice" prime farmland for solar projects when there are thousands of acres of farmland that could be used. This includes land that might not be suitable for farming.

Before the board voted on the ordinance, Jaquielyn Tango, with West Sacramento-based Rios Solar Energy, said it would only take 1,806 acres to power all of Yolo County. She said this is 0.27 percent of the county's total acreage.

"We don't want to negatively impact the county in any way," Tango said.

Chamberlain said there is "no way" the county could be powered with that many acres.