

Clean and Profitable: The Solar Project at Truro Landfill

I'm writing about Warrant Article #13, which proposes installing a solar panel array at our town landfill. This initiative, which will be voted on at the upcoming town meeting, offers both environmental and financial benefits—generating millions in net revenue for Truro over its lifetime, while delivering clean, renewable energy.

Let me share why this solar project deserves our support, with four key benefits that make it a great investment for Truro:

Climate Action: The green energy generated will significantly reduce our carbon footprint, helping mitigate climate change. This is especially important for Truro, as our Outer Cape location makes us vulnerable to climate change impacts.

Financial Opportunity: It creates an impressive new revenue stream that completely pays for itself. At approximately \$500,000 annually, this project would become one of Truro's largest income sources—generating more profit than all beach permits combined. This isn't just great for the environment; it's a tremendous financial boost for our Town Budget.

Energy Independence: We can utilize this electricity internally at reduced costs, keeping energy dollars within our community rather than flowing to outside utility companies.

Resilience Planning: With optional upgrades in the future, this system could provide backup power to essential town buildings during grid outages caused by extreme weather events.

I'd like to address some common questions about this project:

Environmental Impact: This project won't require cutting down any trees. It will be built entirely on our unused, already-capped landfill space.

Financial Investment: While the \$5 million price tag might initially seem steep, it's important to understand that this is a self-funding investment. The town will issue a bond, spreading payments over time (similar to a mortgage), and the revenue generated by the solar array will cover these payments and all maintenance costs.

Tax Impact: During the construction phase, there may be a minimal tax increase for just 1-2 years (approximately \$50 on a \$1m house value). After that, the project not only pays for itself, but generates substantial ongoing revenue for our town.

Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Benefits: Currently the federal government will reimburse us 50% of the cost of the system, but with a new administration these incentives are now uncertain.

While the Inflation Reduction Act makes this project even more financially attractive, our financial models show the project remains profitable for Truro even without these incentives. The IRA enhances returns, but is not required for this to be a sound financial investment for our town.

The project is projected to generate millions in net revenue over its lifetime, fully paying for itself with no long-term tax implications for residents.

Let's take this opportunity to invest in Truro's sustainable future!

By Alex Limpaecher, Citizen of Truro and Climate Action Committee Member

If you want to learn more about the Climate Action Committee or become a member or volunteer, contact Chair Lili Flanders at climateaction@truro-ma.gov. Full- or part-timers welcome!