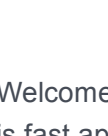




Pennsylvania GreenGov News



TOM WOLF, GOVERNOR

January 2023

Welcome to the January 2023 edition of the *Pennsylvania GreenGov News*! The GreenGov Council is fast approaching its four-year anniversary with the signing [Executive Order 2019-01](#) by Governor Wolf on January 8, 2019, establishing the first-ever statewide climate goal, as well as commonwealth agency lead-by-example performance goals.

The Commonwealth has made significant progress on our lead-by-example performance goals. Over the first three years, commonwealth operations saw an aggregate [12.3 percent energy usage reduction](#) and we initiated the largest solar procurement of its time by any state or local government entity via [PA PULSE](#). Agencies participated in various energy savings projects, committed to constructing new high-performance green buildings, added charging stations to support electric vehicles, and procured sustainable electronics resulting in being recognized three years in a row by the Global Electronics Council [EPEAT program](#). Learn more about these and other achievements in our [annual progress reports](#).

Along with those milestones, agencies have been working behind the scenes to identify new ways to reduce operational carbon emissions. For example, agencies have completed four years of review and assessments using the [GreenGov Agency Certification Checklist](#). The checklist is a first of its kind tool that measures and supports agency's increasing their environmental sustainability within core business areas. Over 30 agencies have taken part in evaluating their performance annually using this checklist with [results posted on our webpage](#). Agency staff have also committed their time to participate in numerous GreenGov focus group meetings to share best practices and enhance collaboration between agencies.

We've also been innovative when it comes to developing tools and resources based on opportunities and identified needs. We now have a pathway for agencies to pursue high-performance leases during renegotiation or entering new facility lease contracts. GreenGov developed a simple and easy to use energy management system based off the [Department of Energy's ISO 50001 Ready program](#), which is available for use by anyone inside or outside the commonwealth. We have procurement opportunities for commonwealth agencies or COSTARS members to partner with small businesses to procure energy audits or ENERGY STAR building certifications. Many of these [resources are available to review on our website](#).

The GreenGov Council has also pursued some broader sustainability themes reaching beyond its core environmental sustainability mission. GreenGov Council has collaborated with Penn State Sustainability Institute to provide education on the [UN Sustainable Goals](#), via monthly webinars and a highly successful PA Sustainability Summit held during [Sustainability Week](#) in October this year.

Commonwealth agencies are assembling agency sustainability teams as required by a recently revised [management directive](#), which we believe will greatly enhance staff's roles and participation in sustainability outcomes within their agencies. Enhanced sustainability efforts within agencies may lead to more comprehensive business operation strategies that support or align with Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) frameworks, utilized by many leading businesses and corporations in Pennsylvania.

Thank you for subscribing to the *GreenGov News* and for your continued support for our mission. In this newsletter, we are highlighting a few of the opportunities showcased during our Sustainability Week from October.

— Mark Hand, Director, [GreenGov Council](#)

GreenGov Council News

Highlights from Sustainability Week – October 3-7



GESA - It's Not Just for State Agencies!

A constant struggle for facility managers has always been finding the balance between effectively maintaining government facilities in a way that meets both the expectations of the public, and government leadership.

Under the Wolf Administration that balance may have finally been found with the revitalization of the Guaranteed Energy Savings Act, or GESA, Program has flourished. GESA projects allow commonwealth agencies to make important energy- and cost-saving facility improvements with no upfront cost. Instead, improvements are paid for using energy savings.

Since the revamping of the program, the commonwealth has invested more than \$255 million into 17 GESA projects. Once complete, these projects will result in energy savings of \$12.5 million annually along with reduced energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions equivalent to more than 77,000 trees planted annually; removing more than 8,300 cars off the road for a year; and more than 4,700 homes annual energy usage.

The great thing about this program is that if you are a Municipal Government, University, School District or Hospital, GESA can be a viable option for our facility improvements!

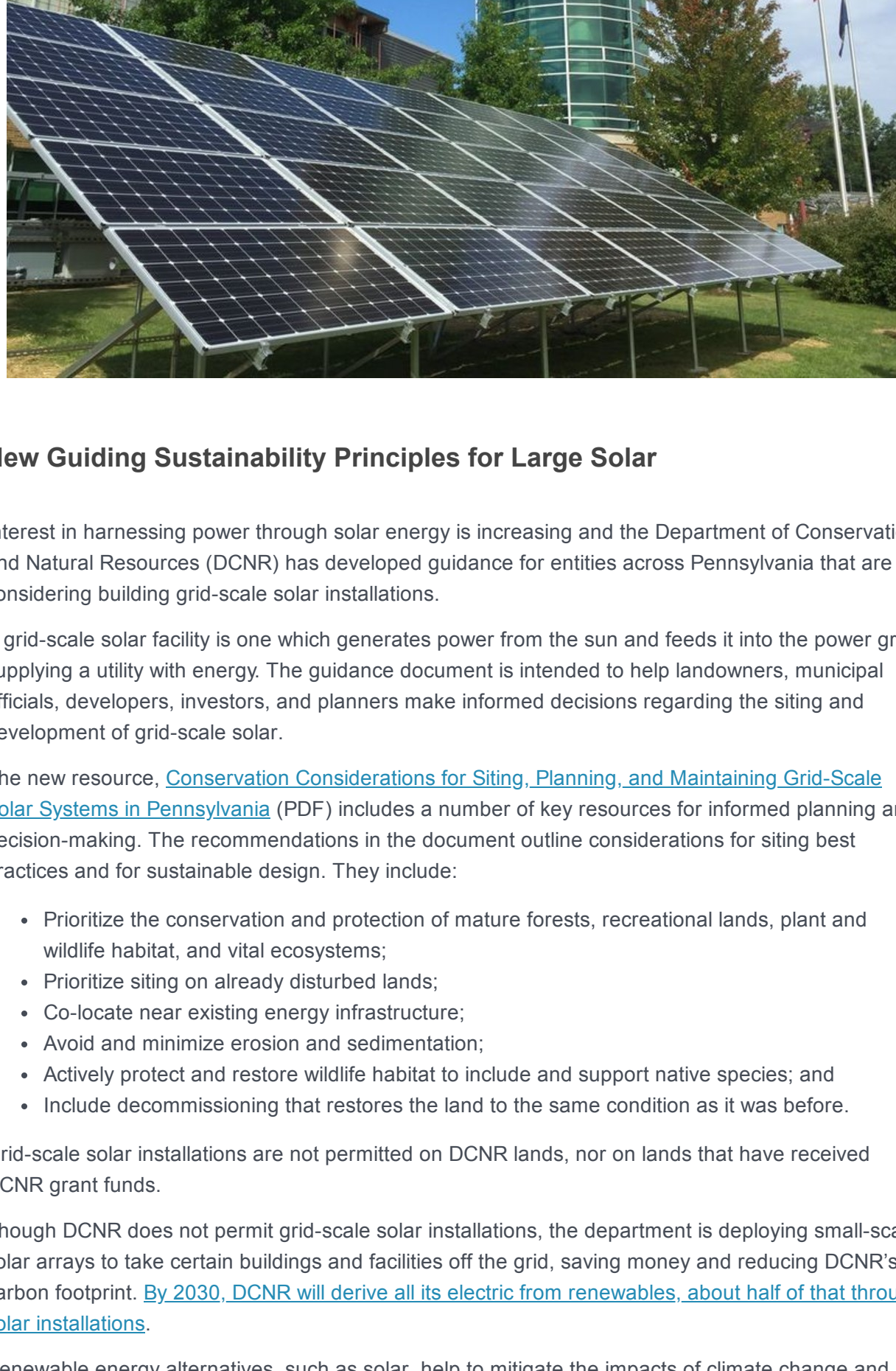
Since a GESA project is funded through a money lease/loan, it important to understand how the recurring payments can affect your organization. It is a requirement that the annual project savings exceed the annual loan payments the savings are based a lot on the information that is provided by the funding organization.

Here are some tips to consider when looking at getting into a GESA project:

- Determine the basic Energy Control Measures, or ECMs, yourself and only consider only proven control measures.
- Consider using your own credit rating to solicit for financing the best interest rate.
- A \$1million project is the smallest one ESCO's will pursue, so it may make sense to combine smaller sites into one project to maximize your resources.
- Include maintenance and finance staff in planning and consider using a consultant. They conduct peer reviews, then transition into the project manager role.

As a public sector entity, the biggest take away is that agencies need to be involved and maintain control of these projects, and not leave that responsibility to the ESCO. We must be smart consumers and utilize the GESA procurement that maximizes the benefits and minimizes the risks.

Visit the Commonwealth's [GESA program page](#) for more information about the program.



New Guiding Sustainability Principles for Large Solar

Interest in harnessing power through solar energy is increasing and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) has developed guidance for entities across Pennsylvania that are considering building grid-scale solar installations.

A grid-scale solar facility is one which generates power from the sun and feeds it into the power grid, supplying a utility with energy. The guidance document is intended to help landowners, municipal officials, developers, investors, and planners make informed decisions regarding the siting and development of grid-scale solar.

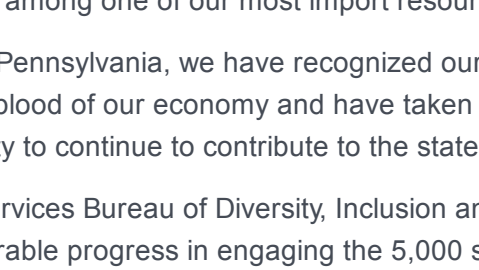
The new resource, [Conservation Considerations for Siting, Planning, and Maintaining Grid-Scale Solar Systems in Pennsylvania](#) (PDF) includes a number of key resources for informed planning and decision-making. The recommendations in the document outline considerations for siting best practices and for sustainable design. They include:

- Prioritize the conservation and protection of mature forests, recreational lands, plant and wildlife habitat, and vital ecosystems;
- Prioritize siting on already disturbed lands;
- Co-locate near existing energy infrastructure;
- Avoid and minimize erosion and sedimentation;
- Actively protect and restore wildlife habitat to include and support native species; and
- Include decommissioning that restores the land to the same condition as it was before.

Grid-scale solar installations are not permitted on DCNR lands, nor on lands that have received DCNR grant funds.

Though DCNR does not permit grid-scale solar installations, the department is deploying small-scale solar arrays to take certain buildings and facilities off the grid, saving money and reducing DCNR's carbon footprint. [By 2030, DCNR will derive all its electric from renewables, about half of that through solar installations.](#)

Renewable energy alternatives, such as solar, help to mitigate the impacts of climate change and reduce the commonwealth's greenhouse gas emissions. According to the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, there are more than 14,000 solar systems operating in Pennsylvania, and the Wolf Administration encourages private citizens to [consider going solar in their homes](#).



What Does Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Have To Do With Sustainability?

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion may not be the first words that come to mind when thinking about the issue of sustainability and conservation, but they play a key role in moving forward with these efforts on a global basis.

The United Nations has connected to this global DEI trend as a foundational internal aspect of corporations and organizations across the world with Sustainable Development Goal #8: Decent Work and Economic Growth.

From a holistic viewpoint, the UN Sustainable Development Goals are about lifting up our populations and veteran businesses as the life blood of our economy and have taken steps to support their ability grow and strengthen their ability to continue to contribute to the state's economy and beyond.

The Department of General Services Bureau of Diversity, Inclusion and Small Business Opportunities, or BDISBO, has made considerable progress in engaging the 5,000 small businesses registered to do business with the commonwealth, through policies and programs that promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth that helps to create productive employment and decent work for all. Through the Commonwealth's purchasing powers we can, and are, making a difference in Pennsylvania's communities through better and more sustainable procurement opportunities.

The commonwealth has experienced tremendous growth in utilizing small businesses over the past seven years totaling more than \$4.5 billion going to these businesses since 2015 and most recently we have achieved the commonwealth's highest annual spend ever at nearly \$1 billion dollars accounting for nearly 20 percent of total commonwealth spend on goods, services, and construction as reported in the 2022 Annual Bureau of Diversity, Inclusion and Small Business Opportunities (BDISBO) Report.

The total federal tax generated from that nearly \$1 billion in contract awards was \$140 million, while total state and local tax generated was \$76 million for a grand total of \$216 million in tax dollars generated. The nearly \$1 billion dollars in contracts awarded to small and small diverse businesses also generated 10,000 new Pennsylvanian jobs during the last fiscal year.

BDISBO sees these well established and growing programs are vital to sustainability that focuses on humans (employees, employees, and customers) who desire and deserve a stable economy. We also believe legislation to statutorily establish the programs and policies we offer is a long-term investment on the financial viability of the next generation.

Visit the [Bureau of Diversity, Inclusion, and Small Business Opportunities](#) for more detailed information on the policies and programs to diversify state contracting and opportunities for small, small diverse and veteran businesses.

Local Climate Action Training Now Available to Municipalities

The [Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Local Climate Action Program](#) has trained 53 cities, townships, boroughs, counties, and regional organizations, representing approximately 380 municipalities statewide, in its first three years.

The fourth year of the Local Climate Action Program started in August 2022. Eleven entities are partnered with 15 students at Penn State University to measure local greenhouse gas emissions and determine local vulnerabilities to climate change impacts, such as flooding. Then, in the coming spring semester, they will work to develop plans of actions to lower emissions and make their communities more sustainable and resilient to climate-related risks. Students and their local government partners will work together to identify priority actions most salient for their communities through community engagement, stakeholder input, and additional technical training support from both the Penn State faculty teaching the class and ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability. By the end of the Spring 2023 semester, the municipal government partners will have a clear roadmap for climate action planning and prioritization moving forward to build more resilient communities that contribute less greenhouse gas emissions.

Interested in participating in the 5th cohort beginning August 2023? Please contact Brandi Robinson at brobinson@psu.edu or Peter Buck (peterbuck@psu.edu) to learn more.

Upcoming Events

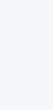
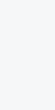
The Council and Penn State's Sustainability Institute are co-hosting our fourth monthly webinar series on various sustainability topics. All who are interested in expanding their knowledge and engaging in conversations with experts are invited to participate.

The remaining series topics include:

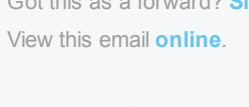
- Sustainability & Resilience in the Community - Food Systems: January 13, 2023;
- Water Resources & Resiliency: February 10, 2023;
- Water Justice, Community Health & Sustainable Communities: March 17, 2023; and
- Land Management Best Practices for Ecosystem Health and Pollinators: April 14, 2023.

All who are interested are asked to complete this [sign-up survey](#) and indicate which presentations they plan to attend. The Council will review the survey and send out Microsoft Teams meeting invitations. [For the full webinar series information, including webinar descriptions and speakers, please click here.](#)

Pennsylvania GreenGov Council



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