

May 11, 2021

To:

**Sen. Gene Yaw, chair, Environmental Resources and Energy Committee;
Sen. Carolyn Comitta, Democratic Chair, Environmental Resources and
Energy Committee;
Sen. Cris Dush, chair Local Government; and
Sen. Tim Kearney, Democratic Chair, Local Government**

**Dear Chairman Yaw, Chairwoman Comitta, Chairman Dush, Chairman
Kearney and Committee Members:**

Thank you for giving Pennsylvania Farm Bureau the opportunity to provide written comments in support of energy choice legislation, particularly Senate Bill 275.

Farms are energy intensive operations. Abundant, and competitively priced, energy is a chief concern of farmers. Reliable energy is a fundamental need for agriculture operations, regardless of the commodity grown. It is especially important as we look at the advent of technology that is revolutionizing agriculture and making farmers better stewards of their land and animals.

Farm Bureau, at the state and national level, has promoted and advocated for policies that foster home-grown energy. Whether that has been supportive of efforts to utilize the Marcellus Shale field for affordable natural gas, or putting solar panels on barn roofs, Pennsylvania farmers believe the best energy source is one that can be produced within the United States. As such, we support an all-of-the-above energy strategy that helps end our dependence on foreign sources and allows landowners to use their land, when practical, for energy development.

We believe that a fundamental right for any homeowner, or small business, is the ability to select the form of energy that is best suited for their needs. A municipality should not be selective in the outright prohibition of any energy source. Nor, should that municipality place regulations that are so restrictive that it makes the use of a particular energy source nearly impossible.

For instance, propane is a key energy source for many farmers as it is used to help protect crops harvested in the fall. Propane is a reliable fuel source that farmers use to dry corn and soybeans in silos to reduce the moisture content to prevent spoilage. In addition, many rural communities lack access to natural gas, due to lack of available pipelines, meaning propane is a valuable home-heating source as well.

Additionally, solar energy has become an attractive option for farmers to help offset some of their energy usage. While we are not aware of any outright prohibition on the use of solar energy—whether rooftop or ground mounted—we do know that some Pennsylvania municipalities have put significant restrictions on their location.

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau believes that residents, businesses and farmers should have the freedom to choose the energy source that best meets their needs. We do not believe that it makes sense for a municipality to restrict any source of energy. Farmers who chose to install solar panels to help power their farm should not face overly restrictive regulations, nor should a farmer needing propane for their farm face an outright municipal probation on that fuel source. We are encouraging the Senate to adopt Senate Bill 275 to protect a consumer's right to choose.

Regards,



Darrin Youker
Director, State Government Affairs