

To: Harrisonburg City Council Members and Candidates:

We ask you to state whether you support amending the City Code (section 8-1-8) to include the phrase “environmentally sustainable” to the mandate of the Harrisonburg Electric Commission.

With the proposed amendment, Section 8-1-8 will read: “...preserve and promote an environmentally sustainable, orderly, economic and businesslike administration of the system....”

Why now? Because:

- See attached sheet: [*“HEC must become sustainable: Here’s why.”*](#)
- HEC will be negotiating their next 20-year contract within the next year. It is essential that the next contract allow Harrisonburg, including HEC, to develop locally-owned, fairly priced solar generation and true community solar.
- HEC Commissioners have no direction or incentive from City Council to alter current provisions to enable HEC to produce any of the electricity it generates using renewable energy or even to pursue a competitive bidding process among multiple energy providers.
- Harrisonburg cannot meet its GHG emission reduction goals, or develop low-cost community solar, without removing the anti-competitive restrictions which are in the current contract.
- The new contract will determine Harrisonburg’s ability to reduce GHG emissions, as well as its access to low-priced electric power.
- Solar is cheaper than conventional power in most of the country. Conventional power costs are climbing steeply. Solar cost continues to drop, making it the power of choice for low-income residents in markets where freedom of energy choice is allowed. Harrisonburg lacks access to competitively-priced grid solar. City Council can empower HEC to establish greater energy freedom in Harrisonburg. Amending our City Code is a necessary first step in unlocking solutions to spiraling energy costs, energy freedom, climate disruption, and electricity burden for Harrisonburg families.
- The path is narrow. The window of opportunity to change course is closing quickly. This course correction is well within the authority and responsibility of Harrisonburg City Council. It will provide HEC the direction and incentive it needs to enable the City to meet its Environmental Action Plan GHG reduction goals, its clean energy resolution and its 2040 vision for the City.

We request that City Council members and candidates state their position on this proposed code change by Tuesday, May 31, at steeringcommittee@50by25harrisonburg.org. Responses will be posted on [our website](#).

Sincerely,

50 x 25 Steering Committee, Climate Action Alliance of the Valley, and
Shenandoah Group of the Sierra Club



50 by 25 Clean Energy for All
Harrisonburg Virginia
50by25harrisonburg.org

