

Land Trust Alliance Rally 2023

Session D10: Advancing Programming to Connect Communities to Conservation

Presenter: Shirley Heinze Land Trust

### **Breakout Session**

#### **Scenario: Renewable Energy and Land Use**

A utility-scale solar energy project was recently announced in a county neighboring your organization's geography. There have been mixed reactions regarding this project from partners, stakeholders, and supporters. Some landowners in the area are concerned about the loss of farmland while others are excited about the financial opportunity it allows their families. Some partners are concerned about the land use and environmental impacts while others, including local municipalities, are supportive of the economic benefits of the project. Your organization has been asked by the solar energy company to be involved in conversations around how to make this project environmentally-friendly, and also by multiple partners and community members about where you stand on utility-scale solar energy projects in your area. How would you design a strategy to engage landowners, partner organizations, and local municipalities to spur a community conversation on balancing renewable energy goals with the current and future protection of working and natural lands?

#### **Questions/Prompts**

- What are the tactics and goals you would set in the first year?
- What partners do you need around the table to inform your planning?
- In what ways would you build trust in the community? How will you ensure that community needs are being taken into account?
- What resources will you need to develop and implement this program?
- What measures you will put in place to track progress and ensure longevity?
- What will be your plan to gather and incorporate community feedback into your programming?