

EXAMINING THE ENERGY ENVIRONMENT

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PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Introduction

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Development Does Not Stop at the Jurisdiction Line

- Individual projects receive local approvals
- Infrastructure and environmental impacts cross boundaries
- Cumulative effects are often larger than a single project
- Who is planning for multi-jurisdictional, regional, and statewide impacts?

What Are the Regional Impacts?

- Infrastructure: transmission, substations, grid capacity, water
- Natural resources: watersheds, habitat, forests, farmland
- Economic: land availability, industry, recreation, tourism
- Community: traffic, waste, emergency services, cost allocation

When Local Decisions Have Regional Impacts

- Solar and interconnection challenges
- Disposal of project-related waste
- New or upgraded transmission lines or substations
- Shared rivers, watersheds, ecosystems, and recreational assets

The Challenge: Fragmented Planning and Review

- Local comprehensive plans and zoning decisions
- DEQ environmental review and permitting
- SCC approvals and utility transmission planning
- Grid interconnection and infrastructure timing
- Limited cross-jurisdictional visibility at decision points

What Can We Learn From Other States?

- **Georgia: Developments of Regional Impact (DRI)**
  - Regional commission review and intergovernmental comments
  - Local land-use decision remains with the locality
- **Massachusetts: Cape Cod Commission**
  - Regional policy plan and review of qualifying projects
  - More substantive regional authority

What Could Proactive Community Planning Look Like?

- Regional suitability, infrastructure, and resource planning
- Notice and referrals across jurisdictional boundaries
- Earlier coordination among PDCs, localities, utilities, state agencies
- Shared tracking of proposed projects and cumulative impacts
- 2025 VA legislation proposed PDC-based regional energy plans

What Role Could PDCs Play?

- Convene neighboring localities, utilities, and agencies
- Develop shared regional priorities and planning information
- Identify cross-boundary and cumulative impacts
- Support coordinated review without replacing local decisions

Closing/Q&A

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- **What regional impacts from solar, data centers or energy infrastructure are you already experiencing or anticipating?**
- **Are your localities coordinating on these issues today? If so, how?**
- **Would a regional review or coordination process be useful, and what role should PDCs play?**

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