

Subject: EV Mandate

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From: Risen Acres

To: HearingComments, DNREC (MailBox Resources)

First, we would like to introduce ourselves. We are Matthew and Erica Schlitter. We own a small 34 acre organic farm. We are longtime Delaware residents with family roots reaching back over 200 years. We are new beginning and young farmers who have a motto of "Farming God's Way". All the inputs we put back into the ground come from either the plant life from our ground or the livestock we intensively graze. We consider ourselves environmental stewards to our land while practicing regenerative and sustainable farming. In the 1950's, our property was stripped of its trees and turned to agriculture fields. Much like Delaware, especially Sussex County, trees have been lost due to development at an astounding rate. Our farm is focused on restoring our fields to its natural state by implementing practices such as agroforestry, alley cropping, and silvopastures.

We have found Delaware does not share in those environmental practices. Delaware appears to be only focused on old farm methods of production of big farms. This is through practices of tillage and burn downs with glyphosate (commonly known as RoundUp) sprayed in the spring and throughout the year. Only recently, Delaware has offered programs such as cover crop programs to stop soil erosion into our waterways. However, these programs have not pushed farmers to no-till methods nor the stopping the use of glyphosate. One may be able to argue that the use of cover crops has increased the use of glyphosate. In 2020, a documentary was released called 'Kiss the Ground'. It can be currently watched on Netflix. In this documentary, they show a satellite model from NASA showing plumes of CO₂. CO₂ levels dramatically spiked in March, April, and May. What is taking place during those months? Tillage and burn downs with glyphosate. They found an enormous amount of CO₂ is released into the atmosphere by both tillage and burn downs. The solution: stop leaving soil bare and leave the ground covered with plants to sequester CO₂ from the atmosphere to the ground. A United States farmer, Gabe Brown, showed that for every 1% increase in organic matter, an acre of land was able to sequester ten tons of carbon.

When we watched the DNREC town hall meetings and slideshows on YouTube, we were sure to see a discussion or slide showing the amount of greenhouse gasses released by agriculture practices. To our amazement, there was none. So we dug more into DNREC's 2017 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory Report. Under agriculture, it appears only lime application was tracked and credited to greenhouse gasses emissions. Was tillage and burn downs taken into account? Was the destruction of our forest and soil disturbance due to the rapid increase of development taken into account? Was fertilizer application taken into account?

At the town hall meetings, DNREC showed how greenhouse gasses cause health issues like allergies, asthma, etc. However, it was not mentioned how the destruction of our forest and mass land disturbance due to development is releasing allergens and viruses from hundreds of years ago as they were trapped in the trees and soil. We learned this from a recent speaker that attended the Delaware Department of Agriculture's annual conference. Is DNREC concerned about this aspect of Delawareans health? According to the latest USDA Bulletin NRS-115 titled Delaware Forest 2013, Sussex County, Delaware saw a 19.17% loss in forested land between 1999 to 2013. There was a 3% loss of forested land between 2008 to 2013 with about 194,000 of estimated forested acres left in Sussex County. Based on this estimation, Sussex County would have approximately 149,000 forested acres left in 2022. If this trend continues, Sussex County will have very little forested area

left in 30 years. Our carbon sequestration will continually decrease.

Next, our electric grid capacity is at a major risk in Delaware. Currently our electric grid is struggling to keep up with the growth of development. Mandating electric cars, which demand a lot of electricity, would devastate Delaware's power system. Much like California, we would have blackouts which Delawareans have never seen before. DEC and DP&L would have to build new power plants at a record pace or import electricity. They would have to update their already outdated power grid in Delaware. This would be a huge cost on the power companies. That cost would be passed onto the Delaware consumer. Can the Delaware consumer afford these massive increases to their power bills? That was not taken into account in DNREC's powerpoint presentation.

Lastly, there is the cost of the EV vehicle. New EV vehicles are \$60,000+. Used EV's are around \$40,000+. Our farm relies on a gas powered vehicle to do work in the field. We use it to reach our livestock. We use it to apply organic fertilizers. We use it to seed. It is basically another tractor for us. We use it to run to the hardware store or pick up materials for the farm. We need it to last an 8 hour day no matter the weather conditions and traverse 34 acres. We paid \$4,000 for the vehicle and we pray it will last us years to come. In addition, we raise conservancy breed livestock. We have one of the rarest pig and chicken breeds in America. We have to travel hundreds of miles away to purchase more livestock to maintain our breeds. We use a gas powered vehicle with a travel trailer to travel. That vehicle was \$14,000. We will most likely have to replace these vehicles in about 10 years. We can't imagine having to pay \$40,000+ for a farm vehicle and another \$40,000+ for a travel vehicle. That would be devastating on our business and our family. In addition, we couldn't afford the increase in electricity that will be caused due to the power companies need to expand production in Delaware. We would also have the cost of downtime waiting for our vehicle to charge on long road trips to pick up livestock. The mandate will most likely lead to fuel cost increase due to the lack of demand. As you may know, being a young beginning farmer is expensive. With our environmental stewardship and the type of farming practices we are implementing, there is little assistance available to us in Delaware. Therefore, the money comes from our own savings and our own production. The EV mandate would most likely put us out of business.

With this being said, we feel DNREC has not done their due diligence in properly assessing the contributors to greenhouse gasses. DNREC did not reveal these other contributing factors and vital information to Delawareans. DNREC has not done their due diligence in identifying or properly addressing the cost impacts to Delawareans. Majority of Delawareans appear to be against this mandate. At the town halls, the only support seemed to be action groups and lobbyists. Even environmental stewards like ourselves recognized the grave impacts on individuals and businesses. Therefore, we cannot support DNREC's mandate for EV vehicles. If DNREC wishes to push forward with the EV Mandate Regulation while not listening and siding with the majority of Delawareans, this mandate should exclude farmers.

God Bless!

Matthew and Erica Schlitter

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