



Manhattan Township

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How Illinois SB25 Reduces Local Control — and What It Means for Manhattan Township

Illinois Senate Bill 25 (SB25) has raised significant concerns for communities across the state, including Manhattan Township. While the bill was intended to create uniform statewide standards for commercial solar energy facilities, it shifts key land-use authority away from local governments and into the hands of the State of Illinois. For a rural community like Manhattan, this change carries real and lasting consequences.

What SB25 Does

SB25 establishes statewide rules for permitting large-scale solar projects and prevents counties and townships from adopting stronger protections. Under the law:

- Local governments must approve solar projects that meet state criteria, even when they conflict with local plans.
- Zoning boards lose the ability to deny or modify proposals based on drainage, farmland preservation, or proximity to homes.
- Local ordinances are effectively overridden, limiting residents' and officials' ability to shape development or protect quality of life.
- Townships can no longer require financial assurances for maintenance, aesthetics, or long-term property care.

For Manhattan Township—where local standards have long guided responsible development—this represents a significant loss of control.

Why This Matters for Manhattan Township

Large-scale solar farms can profoundly affect Manhattan's landscape, infrastructure, and long-term growth. Local officials and residents best understand issues such as:

- Loss of productive farmland that supports the agricultural economy

- Drainage and stormwater impacts in flood-prone areas
- Road wear from heavy construction equipment on roads not built for industrial traffic
- Visual impacts on rural landscapes and nearby homes due to reduced screening and setbacks
- Long-term decommissioning responsibilities if a project fails or a developer leaves
- The township becoming effectively landlocked to the south for 30–50 years, limiting opportunities for more beneficial tax-base development

Under SB25, Manhattan Township has far less ability to require stronger protections, negotiate conditions, or object to projects that do not align with the community’s long-term vision. If a proposal meets the state’s minimum standards, the county must approve it—even when local boards identify legitimate concerns.

Impact on Projects Like EarthRise

Because SB25 overrides local ordinances, proposed projects such as EarthRise no longer have to comply with Manhattan Township’s more protective requirements. Developers are not obligated to meet higher local standards, and township boards cannot impose additional conditions or negotiate improvements. As a result, EarthRise will move forward under state-level rules that may not fully reflect the needs, priorities, or lived experiences of Manhattan Township residents.

How Residents Can Help Protect Manhattan Township’s Voice

Even though SB25 limits township and county authority, residents still play a critical role in shaping how large-scale solar projects move forward. Community engagement matters more than ever.

1. Stay Informed Through the Green Garden Watershed Committee

The Committee provides updates on proposed solar projects, watershed impacts, meeting notices, and educational resources.

More information: <https://greengardentownship.com/home-page/watershed-committee>

2. Attend Will County Hearings and Public Meetings

With decision-making shifted to the county, resident participation is essential. Public comments and strong community turnout help ensure county officials understand the real-world impacts on Manhattan Township.

3. Contact Your State Legislators

Only the state can amend SB25. Share your concerns with:

- **Rep. Anthony DeLuca** – 195 W. Joe Orr Rd., Suite 201, Chicago Heights, IL • 708-754-7900 • anthonydeluca.org
- **Sen. Patrick Joyce** – 179 S. Wall St., Kankakee, IL • 708-756-0882 • senatorpatrickjoyce.com
- **Governor JB Pritzker** – 555 W. Monroe, 16th Floor, Chicago, IL • 312-814-2121 • gov.illinois.gov

4. Talk With Your Neighbors

Community awareness strengthens local advocacy. Encourage others to learn about SB25, attend county meetings, follow township updates, and contact their legislators.

When residents are informed and united, their voices carry further—and are far harder to ignore.