

# Physician Fires "Shot Across The Bow" of Solar Developers and Data Centers In "The State Up North" (Michigan)

Hats off to the Dr. Remington Nevin, Medical Director, St. Clair County Health Department for utilizing the tool, more accurately Michigan law, to protect the health, safety, and welfare his county.

*(Now, before my Buckeye friends jump on me for this post – as it pertains to The State Up North and this Saturday is The Big Game... I felt this was a worthy reason to set this rivalry aside (at least for the moment).) - JW Thompson*

**This post was made (11.25.24) on the STOP SOLAR FARMS Facebook Group, by Mike Hilferink.**

Time to fight back!

The St Clair County, Michigan, Medical Director has recognized the potential health risks involved with industrial solar plants and intends to use all powers available to regulate and stop these corporate cancers from harming the residents.



Share share share. We need to get this strategy out across the state and country. If health departments can shut down almost all businesses during the pandemic, they should have no problem shutting down a few industrial solar plants, for the nuisance and health risk they truly are.

I have summarized the recently released St. Clair County Medical Director report on the potential health risk of solar plants.

 <b>ST. CLAIR COUNTY</b> <b>HEALTH DEPARTMENT</b>		<i>Our Community. Our Environment.</i> 3415 28 <sup>th</sup> Street Port Huron MI 48060
		November 25, 2024
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b> ELIZABETH KANG, RN, MPH DIRECTOR/ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REMYNATION NEVIN, MD, MPH, DPH MEDICAL DIRECTOR DREW BRADSHAW, BS ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER <b>ADVISORY BOARD OF HEALTH</b> MONICA STANGEL CHAIRPERSON JAMIE TAYLOR VICE CHAIRPERSON STEVEN GUAR SECRETARY MARIE J. MULLER KENNETH HEUBLEMAN KEVIN WATKINS STEPHEN SMITH, DC LOAN BRIDGES COUNTY COMMISSIONER	<b>MEMORANDUM FOR:</b> St. Clair County Board of Commissioners <b>FROM:</b> Dr. Remington Nevin, Medical Director, St. Clair County Health Department <b>SUBJECT:</b> Public Health Risks of Industrial Solar Plants and Data Centers  At the November 7, 2024 environmental/public works committee meeting of the St. Clair County Board of Commissioners, public concerns were raised regarding the potential health risks posed by the proposed construction and operation of certain industrial solar plants and data centers in St. Clair County. The county administrator subsequently asked the St. Clair County Health Department to investigate these concerns. This memorandum is provided in response to this request. The opinions expressed in this memorandum are those of the St. Clair County Health Department medical director, acting in his regulatory role "to provide direction [to the local governing entity] in the formulation of medical public health policy and program operation," and in "advising the administrative health officer on matters related to medical specialty judgments." <i>Mich. Admin. Code R 325.13001(d)</i> . These opinions may not represent those of the administrative health officer or the St. Clair County Health Department.  <b>In my professional medical opinion, and based upon my education, training, and experience, and my review of the pertinent facts and circumstances, the construction or operation of industrial solar plants and data centers, located in whole or in part within St. Clair County, and comprising energy facilities eligible for certification under Public Act 233 of 2023, constitute a potential public health risk to the residents of St. Clair County, and are therefore subject to local public health oversight and action.</b>  The Michigan Public Health Code (codified in MCL 333) provides statutory authority for local governing bodies (i.e., within St. Clair County, its Board of Commissioners) to establish a local health department. MCL 333.2413. The local health department so established is required by statute to "promote the public health through organized programs, including prevention and control of environmental health hazards; prevention and control of diseases; [and] prevention and control of health problems of particularly vulnerable population groups." MCL 333.2433(1), <i>emphasis added</i> . The identification of "particularly vulnerable population groups" and the provision of direction on appropriate medical public health policy and program operation to prevent and control health problems among this group constitutes, as above, a matter of medical specialty judgment by the local medical director.	
<b>DEVICES</b> ADMINISTRATION P 810.887.1300 F 810.886.2100 DENTAL CLINIC P 810.886.1557 F 810.886.2147 EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS P 810.887.1300 F 810.887.1300 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH P 810.887.1300 F 810.886.2100 HEALTH EDUCATION P 810.887.1300 F 810.886.2100 NURSING 10/10/24 P 810.887.1300 F 810.886.2100 TODAY HEALTH P 810.887.1311 F 810.887.1311 WIC PROGRAM P 810.887.8222 F 810.886.2100		

**We are determined to take back control from the state by declaring industrial solar plants a public health risk.**

Full report is in the comments.

## Public Health Risk of Industrial Facilities:

- Dr. Nevin expresses concern that industrial solar plants and data centers pose a health risk, especially to vulnerable populations:

*"It is my professional medical opinion that the construction and operation of such facilities could pose a public health risk to the residents of St. Clair County, especially vulnerable populations."*

### **Comparison to COVID-19 Restrictions:**

- He draws parallels to coronavirus restrictions, where local health authorities imposed regulations to protect public health:

*"Local health departments have historically played an important role in safeguarding public health through regulations that directly address health risks, as demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic when restrictions on businesses and social activities were imposed to protect the health of the community."*

### **Health Department's Authority:**

- Dr. Nevin argues that the Health Department should have authority to regulate industrial facilities to protect public health:

*"The St. Clair County Health Department should have the authority to regulate these facilities to ensure that they are constructed and operated in a way that does not pose a risk to public health."*

### **Precedent for Local Health Regulation:**

- While recognizing state law restrictions, he emphasizes that local health departments can still act independently to safeguard health:

*"While Public Act 233 of 2023 preempts local land use controls over the siting of energy facilities, local health departments retain independent authority under the Public Health Code to protect public health in the face of risks posed by such facilities."*

### **Recommendation for Proactive Health Orders:**

- Dr. Nevin recommends adopting health orders and regulations similar to COVID-19 measures to manage the potential risks of industrial facilities:

*"It is my recommendation that the St. Clair County Health Department adopt regulations and draft health orders to ensure that industrial solar and data center facilities meet public health standards with respect to environmental health hazards,*

*contamination, and health problems that may arise from their construction and operation."*

### **Public Engagement in Decision-Making:**

- He stresses the importance of public input and formal processes in adopting health regulations:

*"The adoption of these regulations should be subject to public input and formal processes, to ensure that the community has an opportunity to engage in the decision-making process."*

### **Independent Authority of Health Department:**

- Dr. Nevin underscores the importance of maintaining the Health Department - It's independent authority, similar to the role health agencies played during the pandemic:

"As a physician with expertise in public health and preventive medicine, I believe the Health Department must retain its independent authority to act in the best interests of public health, independent of local governing entities that may be subject to political pressures."