



In support of a Conditional Use Permit, (CUP) - case #24-5200 Rancho Viejo Solar

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To Public Comments AES/BESS Permit Hearing <publiccomment@santafecountynm.gov>

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In support of a Conditional Use Permit, (CUP) - case #24-5200 Rancho Viejo Solar

July 10, 2025

I support local renewable energy and economic development that will result from the Rancho Viejo Solar+BESS (Battery Energy Storage System) project because:

- We need new renewable energy projects to meet our goals and replace capacity lost from shutting down coal plants
- Solar+BESS is the lowest cost type of "new" power generation plant that we can build in NNM that is "shovel ready" with mature technology and a great safety record. BESS is required to be co-located with Utility-size Solar to prevent overloading power lines during the day, and to enable distribution of Solar energy all night long.
- Solar+BESS close to energy needs served results in lower cost to consumers. Energy coming from "far away" is more expensive with energy lost in transmission, and less reliable in areas where power lines through forests may need to be de-energized during windstorms to prevent fires. The Rancho Viejo Solar location is well situated in a low fire, low fuel risk area on the fringe of communities served.
- LOCAL Solar+BESS energy sold to PNM will provide long-term fixed cost energy for 30 years
- In addition to safe, reliable Solar energy 24/7, Santa Fe County would enjoy economic benefits from 200+ construction jobs, and millions of dollars in tax revenue from energy production contributing to fund our local roads and schools
- ZERO CO2, methane, sulfur, mercury, or radioactivity during operation
- almost-ZERO water use - about 4 homes worth - while supplying power to 37,000 homes

I reject disinformation and baseless fears and concerns from the "Clean Energy Coalition". I have learned that:

- ZERO fires have NEVER spread from a Utility scale BESS facility to damage public/private property in the US according to the Electric Power Research Institute, (EPRI), database
- The risk of fire occurring at a modern (post-2022 design) BESS container systems certified safe by UL-9540, and sited per National Fire Association Standard-855, (NFPA-855) guidelines, and built following the current National Electrical Code, (NEC), for stationary battery storage,

i.e., a "containerized" BESS facility, is lower than from lightning, campfires, car fires, house fire, fireworks. In fact, per the EPRI database, there have been only 7 modern BESS container facility fires in the last 5 years in the US, and NONE have spread to more than one container at a facility, and NONE have resulted in deaths

- modern BESS containers have ZERO "bad" PFAS inside them, (only an EPA approved fire suppressant), and have not been linked to any toxic/hazardous contamination of air, ground, or water during or after a fire per any available Federal, State, or County reports

Respectfully,

Pamela Gilchrist

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