Outlook

In support of CUP - case #24-5200 Rancho Viejo Solar

From Andrew Rodney <andrew@digitaldog.net>
Date Mon 7/7/2025 10:50 AM
To Public Comments AES/BESS Pernit Hearing <publiccomment@santafecountynm.gov>

Warning:

Dear County Commissioners,

We are writing to express our strong support for the Rancho Viejo Solar + Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) project, which we believe is vital for the entire community's future. Here are several key reasons for our support:

1. **Renewable Energy Goals**: Transitioning to renewable energy sources is crucial as we strive to meet our sustainability targets and offset the capacity loss from the decommissioning of coal and distant nuclear plants. This is why we have produced more electricity from our home solar system than we use since 2012.
2. **Cost-Effectiveness**: Solar + BESS represents the most economical solution for new power generation in Northern New Mexico. This mature technology is ready for implementation and boasts an excellent safety record. Co-locating BESS with utility-scale solar helps prevent power line overload during peak hours and ensures energy availability around the clock.
3. **Local Economic Benefits**: Establishing local Solar + BESS facilities will lead to lower energy costs for consumers. Energy transmitted from remote locations incurs additional costs due to transmission losses and potential reliability issues, especially in fire-prone areas. The Rancho Viejo Solar site is strategically located to minimize these risks.
4. **Stable Energy Pricing**: By selling locally generated solar energy to PNM, we can secure long-term fixed energy costs for the next 30 years, avoiding the fluctuations associated with market rates from distant energy sources.
5. **Job Creation and Revenue**: This project will generate over 200 construction jobs and produce substantial tax revenue, which can be invested in our local infrastructure, including roads and schools.
6. **Environmental Impact**: The operation of this facility will produce zero emissions—no CO2, methane, sulfur, mercury, or radioactivity—and will require minimal water, approximately the equivalent of what four households use for cleaning solar panels while powering 37,000 homes.

We also want to address some of the misinformation surrounding this project, which is based on concerns about BESS technology. A recent study shows that the battery storage (BESS) failure incident rate dropped 98% between 2018 and 2024, going from around 9.2 failures per GW of battery energy storage systems (BESS) deployed in 2018 to around 0.2 in 2023. This, according to the US Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI),

Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL), and data analytics provider TWAICE. Not only are BESS fires exceedingly rare, but current modern safety protocols are incredibly effective. The CSA Group is a standards organization that develops standards in 57 areas and was established in 1919. The CSA conducted a test and video of a BESS under the latest safety standards, UL9540A, which will also be implemented here. Although this standard pertains to a U.S. standard for fire safety, it is also widely adopted globally. Thermal runaway was introduced, and autonomous systems extinguished the fire in 37 seconds with no fire spread to any other modules. The CSA BESS Video:
player.vimeo.com/progressive_redirect/playback/1051974394/rendition/1440p/file.mp4?loc=external&signature=1657675a17cf0b8e0b14266b2a40c9a121590dd46d40e65b84176c0e722abb0a

In the past five years, only seven fires have occurred at modern BESS facilities, none of which resulted in fatalities or significant property damage. Additionally, these facilities utilize EPA-approved fire suppressants and are free from any hazardous substances. FK-5-1-12 (Novec 1230) is currently used throughout our community, such as data centers, server rooms, museums, clean rooms, hospitals, banks, archives, libraries, and other locations where sensitive electronics or artifacts are present. This is NOT A FOAM, and the likelihood of this gas entering groundwater is about zero! There is no evidence that it has or can.

Based on data and evidence, we firmly believe that the Rancho Viejo Solar project is a progressive step towards a sustainable future for our community, and we reject any unfounded fears propagated by opposition groups.

Thank you very much for considering our perspective on this critical initiative.

Respectfully,
Andrew & Karen Rodney, 30-year residents of Eldorado with two properties.
4 Gavilan Place
Santa Fe, NM 87508-8855