Outlook

Opposed to CUP case #I24-5200 Rancho Viejo Solar

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Hearing Officer and BCC members--

I understand that a vote on the AES solar array installation may be coming soon. After considerable thought and research, I urge the BCC to deny approval.

I served for three years on the CDRC, the immediate predecessor to the Planning Commission, including one year as Chair, so I am very familiar with the latitude that the BCC enjoys with Conditional Use Permits. In addition I have degrees in Electrical Engineering and am a Registered Professional Engineer, so I have familiarity with electrical power generation, storage, and distribution.

I believe in renewable energy--we have invested in a solar array on the roof of our home in Eldorado, and whole-house battery backup in our garage. My concerns are not only with large-scale volatile battery storage, which I firmly believe are best located well away from populated areas. But also with the grid destabalizing effects of improperly designed large solar arrays.

While solar zealots would have us believe otherwise, it is now known that solar power is a mixed blessing. The recent blackout in Spain on April 28, 2025 has been traced to too much solar power feeding the grid!

With solar accounting for ~55–60% of generation in Spain at the time, the grid had minimal spinning reserves. Conventional inverter-based systems lack the mechanical inertia needed to absorb sudden fluctuations in both demand and supply, creating sudden shifts in grid frequency, making a local network incompatible with connections to adjacent networks, and leading to automatic disconnection from the national grid and local grid collapse as automatic self-protection disconnects activate and cascade. For more info consult Spain's Solar-Fueled Grid Collapse: Aftermath and Lessons Learned, from the *Digital Wind* website--a proponent of renewable energy!

Digital Wind concludes: "The future isn't just about adding more renewables. It's about building the systems that can handle them." And I would add, designing them with grid-forming inverter technology (see reference, which the AES design lacks), and locating them appropriately away from dwelling areas. Denial of the requested CUP would not only be a sound application of zoning, but a sound step in maintaining a reliable electrical grid for Santa Fe and New Mexico.

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