

6/1/25

Dear County Commissioners,

I am writing to share my opinion on the AES Solar facility being considered by the County Commissioners. I know you share my concerns about any project that might cause irreparable harm to the lives and property of your constituents. I believe the current design and siting is **not in the interest** of residents of Santa Fe County.

I am a solar energy advocate who has spent much of my own time and money installing a solar system on my own property so I really wanted to support this project, but after educating my self about the pros and cons of the facility as it is designed, I cannot support it. It is clear to me that this facility is totally inappropriate for this location for the following reasons:

- AES own Annual report states:

"...The hazards described above, along with other safety hazards associated with our operations, can cause significant personal injury or loss of life, severe damage to and destruction of property, plant and equipment, contamination of, or damage to, the environment..... "

This plus the track record of AES at their other, similar facilities almost guarantee that Lithium Ion Battery installations of this nature are a fire hazard. The chemicals used for fire suppression and the toxic smoke that prompted evacuations and poisoned ground water during previous fires are of great concern for surrounding communities. The current siting is very close to over 10,000 New Mexicans which puts Santa Fe County residents and our precious resource of water at **un-necessary risk**.

- The NM State Legislature has now labeled PFAS as toxic Chemicals. Both the batteries themselves and the fire suppression chemicals contain high levels of PFAS. It's not a question of if there will be a fire but when.... So why would we site a facility of this nature, with such high risk of battery fires so close to our communities and the aquifers that we rely on?!

-Since the NM state land office has already identified more than 9 million acres in our state that are safer and more acceptable places to site a facility of this nature I ask you (and I would really like to know) **Why is this site, with all its risks to the surrounding communities, still being considered?**

-With our high winds and highly flammable grasses and native flora there is no guarantee that a fire at the facility would be contained. Several windy days this past month were extreme and weather extremes are increasing. I'm sure you are aware of the recent fires along I25 both north and south that seem to have been started by the flick of a cigarette out a car window! There is no reality of "containment" in this area. I live just east of the proposed facility and am very concerned for my community. Many of my neighbors have already been dropped by insurance companies for living in a fire prone area - what will this facility do to exacerbate that problem?

It makes no sense to build this facility, with all its inherent flaws and risks **when there are other sites** that have already been identified, that might work as well or better for AES and for the residents of Santa Fe County. **IT MAKES NO SENSE.**

I have many other concerns but I'll stop here. Thank you for your time and listening to (reading!) my concerns. Many years ago when fracking was being proposed in the Galisteo Basin, the County halted all permitting till the repercussions could be understood and rules written for any company that wanted a permit to drill. It seems the same caution and forethought is demanded in this situation. Please do not support the AES facility as currently sited and planned.

Sincerely,

Amy Bertelli

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