



The AES "dust-up" over the Rancho Viejo Solar Project

From Nancy Johnson <nejohnson@cybermesa.com>

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To Dominic J. Sisneros <djsisneros@santafecountynm.gov>; Alexandra Ladd <aladd@santafecountynm.gov>

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[City of Rio Rancho cuts ribbon on new solar farm - KOB.com](#)

I am a 22 year resident of Eldorado so I have known of several 'dust-ups' with Warren Thompson (like the proposed, then died, major truck stop/rest area off I-25 at Route 14). Now we face a much more potentially devastating situation to many: the utility/industrial scale solar energy project that is right in our neighborhoods but will impact others as well. If you read, or even just see the photos (the links are above), of the Solar Project that opened in December, 2024 "near" Double Eagle Airport in ABQ, you will see that PNM is a partner for purchasing the power generated by this project. They were there for the ribbon cutting. There are no buildings in view, unlike what AES proposes. And PNM has not agreed to purchase this solar-generated power for use right here.

The arguments pro and con are well known. But on Next Door last week, one of the very pro-solar people told the rest of us to "take the risk". Yes, the Governor has set a timeline for when she wants New Mexico to be completely energy self-sufficient. She did not say that it had to be within Santa Fe county! There are many open areas in our State where up to 10,000 people are not located within a mile of the risk area. This arrangement that I question seems to be an opportunistic agreement between a landowner and a solar company (with major fines in their history). Is this how the County makes decisions, whether or not the residents will be impacted ...pro or con?

And what is "risk"? Most people are using it in terms of fire. So perhaps there is no fire from the BESS containers in the 35 (or however long AES decides to stay and then abandons the property) years the project is with us. But what about the other risks: home owner insurance rates skyrocket or are cancelled and the companies leave the area, county, state - which is happening in many areas of the country including here already as State Farm has already announced a 30% increase in premiums; existing wildlife corridors that may be centuries old are blocked; air quality due to toxic (?) fumes and dust being sent east toward Eldorado during construction and beyond with our constant gentle breezes to frequent gusts - is that toxic to breathe and dangerous to residents' health?; impact on water quality as all the water that AES has said they will need will go into the ground and the aquifer(s) that we need for our water now.

How will any of these risks impact the value of our homes and safety? What about the noise that comes from the building and operation of the proposed AES facility. Do the residents agree that these risks are acceptable

when we still have no proof that PNM will buy the energy generated here and use it in the 3 areas (San Marcos, Rancho Viejo and Eldorado) plus other areas in Santa Fe ... or will it go to the highest bidder wherever they are but we assume all the risk? Who will pay for any damages to buildings, finances or training of the volunteer Fire Departments in our areas?

It could end up being tragic if the “deciders” on this issue just accepted our comments and questions without doing their own research and answering our concerns before voting.

Just a few people should not make such an important decision that impacts so many people and puts everyone at risk. Why should the residents of Eldorado, San Marcos and Rancho Viejo have to sacrifice so that a local individual property owner and an out of state company can benefit with no input from those who may have to make the sacrifice?

Thank you for “listening”.

Nancy E. Johnson

9 Avenida Casa del Oro

Santa Fe, NM 87508

505-466-1982 home

505-603-3588 cell

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