

To: The Board of County Commissioners, Santa Fe, NM

Date: June 29, 2025

From: Craig & Barbara Castleman, 10 Moya Loop, Eldorado at Santa Fe –
barbaracastleman@gmail.com

Subject: Opposition to the AES Rancho Viejo Solar Project

Dear Mr. Sisneros,

We are writing to voice our strong objection to the proposed AES solar array farm and lithium battery storage project.

With so much open space available in New Mexico, there is simply no justification for locating this high-risk environmentally hazardous facility so close to thousands of homes.

We are most concerned about the possibility of a fire and the lack of preparedness for dealing with both a fire and the related evacuation of thousands of Eldorado residents including hundreds of schoolchildren. Plans call for 30,000 gallons of water to be stored at the facility. While not enough water to put out a lithium battery fire, it is a fraction of the water that will be required to build and maintain this facility. Where will this water come from?

Additional concerns are related to the environmental damage that will be caused in the name of producing “clean” solar energy. This includes damage caused by heavy machinery and toxic materials that will be transported to and stored at the site; the displacement and death of wildlife; noise (a constant hum), and light pollution. We are also concerned for the safety of our Santa Fe County firefighters.

AES as a corporation does not have a good track record of protecting the environment. On the contrary, they have proven to be more concerned with profit than people and animals.

We are senior citizens who have invested our life savings in our Eldorado home. If this facility is allowed to be built within 4,000 feet of our community, it will affect our ability to someday sell our home, as most people will not want to purchase a home so close to the massive AES facility. It may also impact our ability to obtain homeowners’ insurance in the future.

We strongly urge Santa Fe County to reject locating this facility so close to a residential area where the lives and well-being of thousands of people would be at risk.

Please put the valid concerns of people who live close to the proposed facility ahead of AES’ corporate profit. At the very least, the project must be delayed until appropriate plans for effectively dealing with a potential fire and evacuation, as well as an environmental impact study, can be made

Thank you for your time and consideration. Sincerely, *Barbara & Craig Castleman*