

June 7, 2024

✓ Chace Pedersen

Cory Wright

Chace.pedersen@co.kittitas.wa.us

Cory.wright@co.kittitas.wa.us

Re: Poison Springs Land and Solar Industrial Site proposed

*CU-24-00003 SCHNEELY
COULEE SOLAR FARM*

After developing, working, managing, owning and operating our business, Yakima River RV Park, for twenty-six years on Ringer Loop Road, just off Canyon Road in Ellensburg, we decided it was time to sell and move on.

We are currently building a million-dollar home and shop in the beautiful neighborhood of Sage Hills, off Vantage Highway. Our plan is to retire and spend the remainder of our lives in the rural area enjoying the 360-degree view of rolling hills, Mount Rainier, Mount Adams, and the beautiful green Kittitas Valley with all its largely unspoiled natural resources.

Recently we were made aware of a Conditional Use Permit Application with Kittitas County for an exceptionally large Solar Industrial Site to be built on our doorstep. This Industrial Project immediately borders thirteen of the 24 Sage Hills landowners' properties. It appears the Industrial Project will cover more than double the size of the whole Sage Hills Neighborhood.

This is extremely disappointing, and we have questions and comments we would like considered in your decision:

1. Is the land zoned Ag 20 or Industrial. If the land is zoned Industrial, when was it rezoned Industrial?
2. Who owns the land where the Solar Industrial Site is proposed?
3. Is the land leased to the Solar Company or are they purchasing the land and if purchasing, are they a foreign company.
4. There will be dirt erosion and the dirt will become "Dead Dirt", unsuitable for crop production. What measures will be taken during construction and the life of the project to mitigate dust and dirt. There will be destruction of the underlying farm acreage because the site is typically cleared of much of its topsoil, compacted, and chemically treated to control plant growth. Chemicals & herbicides are used to eliminate plant growth where large numbers of solar panels will be clustered. If used, these chemicals will affect our water sources.
5. Land disturbance is not confined to the footprint of the operating site, but also includes the associated construction of access roads, right of ways, and the upgrading or construction of transmission lines.
6. Herbicides and chemicals used for ground clearance and maintenance should be identified and records should be maintained and available for inspection to show the volume and frequency of

their use as well as location where they are stored and whether they are slow-time release or not. All toxic metals contained in solar panels should be identified.

7. What will the air quality be? Our air quality is extremely important to us.
8. While some local employees may be used as part of the construction crew that clear and level the site, their jobs are temporary and end when the site preparation work is completed.
9. Storms can damage solar panels containing highly toxic metals known to be carcinogens. Cleaning up of toxic waste material is difficult and very costly, and there is no certified regional means of solar panel toxic waste treatment, recycling or decommissioning. The LLC Corporations who install Solar Industrial Sites take no responsibility for future damage if they are only leasing the land rather than owning the land. Some of these companies have left broken glass, damaged, twisted racks, crushed solar panels and damaged wiring, and no bond to back up the mess caused. They leave town and it is left up to the landowner to clean up, which could take millions of dollars and be an eyesore for eternity. High wind conditions could potentially damage and dislodge the solar panels, with glass and toxic materials strewn over a wide area far beyond the footprint of the solar site. Federal, State and County regulatory authorities need to address the disposing of solar panels in regular landfills, with toxic materials leaching into the soil and water supply. The cost of disposal or recycling must be built into the business model of those operating Solar Sites as well as financial security and secured bonds to cover the anticipated cost of cleaning up solar waste and decommissioning.
10. What is the impact on the local environment if land is converted from its existing farm or natural state to a solar power generation station? This is a question that requires a thorough environmental assessment because the potential for substantial environmental damage can be significant, long lasting, impacting neighboring properties and be very costly to remediate.
11. None of the power generated by a Solar Site is channeled to a local resident, local business or directly to any local consumer. It is sold to public utilities or electric power contractors who purchase it for sale to a grid.
12. Will this Solar Site be exempt from property tax revenue in Kittitas County?
13. What is the total acreage planned to be used?
14. The proposed land is a critical habitat for wildlife, namely elk and deer and smaller animal populations. Farmland and natural sagebrush land not only absorb carbon, but they also absorb water which helps to avoid erosion and runoff and they provide critical habitat for countless numbers of species, plants and insects. The US Fish and Wildlife Service has referred to Solar Industrial Sites as "mega-traps" for wildlife when the high temperature solar beams ignite insects and birds.
15. This proposed Solar Industrial Site will ruin the whole rural atmosphere of the area.
16. Kittitas County and the Ellensburg Valley are aesthetically pleasing and are marketed to attract families, retirees and tourism to the area and to reaffirm the conservation goals and values of local government to existing residents. A City of Ellensburg ad states unique environment and quality of life.
17. The value of homes in the Sage Hills neighborhood will drastically decrease in value.
18. What about glass reflection and glare? All lighting in our neighborhood must be pointed in a downward direction.

19. Sage Hills homeowners and landowners will be at risk of a much higher fire danger due to solar panel sites posing the risk of electrical fires caused by arc flashes and power surges which could require County services by fire and rescue squads.
20. A Solar Industrial Site has nothing to do with farming or activities related to agriculture.
21. The Solar Industrial Site is a disruption of the local ecosystem.
22. Solar Industrial Sites contain highly toxic materials.
23. Solar Farms pose a direct and very real threat to scenic beauty, and unspoiled natural resources.
24. The production of Solar Panels as one means of helping to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels was never intended to be a license for the solar industry to destroy productive farmland, forests and unspoiled natural resources, which are the cornerstone of most rural communities. Solar panel business entities are usually non-resident corporations who view our open space lands as assets to be exploited, not assets to be preserved.

Because Solar Industrial Sites are industrial properties that are by design destructive of farmland, they should not be approved as a "Conditional" or "Permitted" use in an area designated by the County as "Agricultural District", or near residential areas. Nor should they be approved in an environmentally sensitive area where they would pose a threat to wildlife. If approved at all, solar farms should be sited in an industrial district where other industrial activities are authorized or located far enough away from residential areas to prevent them from affecting the scenic beauty that we purchased our property for.

This Solar Industrial Site on the Poison Springs Land neighboring Sage Hills residential area should be denied a Conditional Use Permit.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Randy and Darlene Grant

791 Ringer Loop Rd.

Ellensburg WA 98926-8481

509 899-7714

503 572-0930

yakimarvpark@yahoo.com

dtroop717@outlook.com

Randy & Darlene Grant
791 Ringer Loop Rd
Ellensburg, WA 98926



RECEIVED
JUN 10 2024

Kittitas County CDS

CHASE PEDERSEN
KCCDS #2
411 N. RUBY ST.,
ELLENSBURG WA 98926