

Kittitas County Community Development Services
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Kittitas County CDS

CU-24-00003 Schnebly Coulee Solar Farm

Sage Hills Lot #5

1. As far as dust suppression, I only see a one-liner addressing the issue. Considering the fact that the Ellensburg winds are notorious, and coming from a construction background, I have a very real concern about the contractor's ability to maintain the air quality that the residents of Sage Hills and surrounding residents are accustomed to. The area has a several inch layer of volcanic ash from Mount St. Helens' volcanic eruptions. St Helens ash was subjected to mineralogical, analytical, and hemolytic studies to evaluate their potential for cytotoxicity and fibrogenicity. Plagioclase minerals constitute the major component of the ash with free crystalline silica concentrations. The *in vitro* hemolytic activity of the volcanic ash was compared to similar concentrations of cytotoxic and inert minerals. The ash was markedly hemolytic, exhibiting an activity like chrysotile asbestos, a known fibro genic agent. The hemolysis of the different ash samples varied with particle size but not with crystalline silica concentration. The results of these studies taken in conjunction with the results of animal studies indicate a fibro genic potential of volcanic ash in exposed humans. I foresee an issue with keeping the ground wet enough that it will not be a problem. Also of concern is the firebreak surrounding the site, unless it is covered with a layer of gravel. My concern is that outdoor use and enjoyment of our property will be greatly impacted, and I envision a layer of dust covering everything. With my diagnosed lung disease, I believe it will be a danger to my health and may very well confine me to an indoor only enjoyment of my home.
2. In the site plan, I see that solar panels will be right up against our property line. This will put us directly adjacent to an industrial site, which I am convinced will directly impact the real value of our property, along with an adverse aesthetic impact on the enjoyment of our home. Considering the area that the solar facility has to work with I am strongly advocating for a setback of at least 5000 feet from our property line, which is less than the minimum recommended by the World Health Organization.
3. Concerning solar glare, the panels track east to west, but are in a fixed north to south axis. As the sun moves in the seasonal southern alignment, the chance for glare increases, even with reduced glare surface. Although reduced, depending on the elevation of the home above the panels, and the season, there will still be a reflective amount of "glare".
4. Concerning noise, many of the residents in the Sage Hills community are retired, so noise would detract from the peace and quiet that we are accustomed to. My wife and I bought property here for that and other reasons. We don't start work at 7:00 a.m. and don't work until dark anymore.
5. Another issue is site night lighting. We now enjoy the ability to sit out at night and enjoy the quiet solitude of our surroundings, and gaze at the wonders of the night sky. I am concerned that the addition of light sources in the area will introduce light pollution into our area, thus reducing our ability to enjoy the night.
6. My wife and I, and everyone else in the Sage Hills community, I am sure, bought and moved here for the rural quiet and beauty of the environment. I know that had we known that we were going to be living next to an industrial site, we would not have purchased this property to build our retirement home on. I guess I have turned into one of those "NOT IN MY BACK YARD" people, and I do know that the only constant in life is

change, but I also think that as people move into more rural settings in order to regain the sanity that we have left, there are better places to build an industrial complex. I am sure that there are areas that do not yet have residential areas next door. If you build before people, come to the area. It is a win-win for everyone concerned.

7. This Solar Industrial Site on the Poison Springs Land neighboring Sage Hills residential area should be denied a Conditional Use Permit.
8. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Randy & Darlene Grant
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June 7, 2024

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CU-24-00003 SCHNEELY COULEE
SOLAR FARM

RECEIVED
AUG 21 2024

Re: Poison Springs Land and Solar Industrial Site proposed

Kittitas County CDS

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.

According to the **World Health Organization**, Solar Farms are required to be built at least 3 km (1.86 miles) from residential areas (July 26, 2023).

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

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