

Jeff Watson

From: Carol Martinez <moxeecarol@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 02, 2016 8:57 AM
To: Jeff Watson; letters@kvnews.com; bpackard@tnc.org; barnes@oneenergyrenewables.com; Patricia Clerf
Cc: Carol Martinez; leaders@agforestry.org
Subject: Iron Horse Solar Farm Opposition - Save Our Farms!
Attachments: IronHorse_opposition.doc

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

June 1, 2016

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Fax 509-962-7682

RE: Iron Horse Solar Farm (IHSF) replacing farm land/ CU-15-00006

As an adjacent land owner, I disagree with the construction of IHSF on Ellensburg, WA land that is zoned agriculture. It would be shameful to wreck such prime farm ground when there is more suitable land in the adjacent sage lands outside of the irrigation district. The IHSF use is not consistent with the intent and character of the zoning district in which it will be located. The proposed use does not preserve the rural character as defined in the GMA. In addition the county planning under GMA 365.196.815 “conservation of natural resources” must adopt regulations to conserve agricultural lands (see attached). According to the USDA, we are losing agricultural lands at the rate of one acre/minute. Where will our domestically produced food come from 50 years from now?

Aesthetically IHSF does not conform to the surrounding pastoral countryside. IHSF is a commercial operation with 18,600 cells surrounded by an 8’ chain link fence and the largest facility in the state. This does not blend with the rural setting.

How is the array affected by frequent fog covered days? Do the panels still rotate? The higher elevation sage lands are usually fog free during these times. Do the frequent strong winds cause any vibrations or noise in the panels? In the event of any breakage, are there toxic chemicals that can contaminate the air or soil or water down wind?

The IHSF is located in the flood plain of Caribou Creek. What precise measures will be taken to alleviate this possible flood situation?

The electromagnetic frequency (EMF) emitted by IHSF has the potential to disrupt communications according to some technical advisors. Has this been studied and what is the mitigation plan?

IHSF proposes planting disturbed areas with weed free seed. How will IHSF mitigate control of the invasion of noxious weeds? Since there is no irrigation proposed, what measures will be used to reduce fire danger during summer months and weed control and dust control?

What mitigation has the IHSF proposed for the noise from the inverters and transformers from the 24 hour constant noise?

What financial security and bonds will be placed to insure the project will be decommissioned in an environmentally responsible way after its 36 year expected lifetime?

Local property values will deflate and lead to lower tax revenue for the county and schools. How will IHSF mitigate the economic impact to our community?

Less than 1% of power in the US is generated by solar, the price of oil is going to stay low for a long time and the federal subsidies for this type of power generation will change with the political climate. Many solar power manufactures and operators are going bankrupt (<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/industry-news/energy-and-resources/solar-panel-firm-sunedison-files-for-bankruptcy-protection/article29707816/>). Does the county administration want to be the first to approve a project fiercely incongruent with the local nature of the area in a economically speculative technology at the present time?

Please consider our concerns on this very important issue and keep the land in agriculture. Your decision will set a precedent for the county and state. Do we want to be a farming community replaced by panels?

Yours very truly,

Carol Martinez
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Attachment
WAC 365-196-815 Conservation of natural resource lands

WAC 365-196-815

Conservation of natural resource lands.

(1) Requirements.

(a) Counties and cities planning under RCW 36.70A.040 must adopt development regulations that assure the conservation of designated agricultural, forest, and mineral lands of long-term commercial significance. If counties and cities designate agricultural or forest resource lands within any urban growth area, they must also establish a program for the purchase or transfer of development rights.

(b) "Conservation" means measures designed to assure that the natural resource lands will remain available to be used for commercial production of the natural resources designated. Counties and cities should address two components to conservation:

(i) Development regulations must prevent conversion to a use that removes land from resource production. Development regulations must not allow a primary use of agricultural resource lands that would convert those lands to nonresource purposes. Accessory uses may be allowed, consistent with subsection (3)(b) of this section.

(ii) Development regulations must assure that the use of lands adjacent to designated natural resource lands does not interfere with the continued use, in the accustomed manner and in accordance with the best management practices, of these designated lands for the production of food, agricultural products, or timber, or for the extraction of minerals.

(c) Classification, designation and designation amendment. The department adopted minimum guidelines in chapter [365-190 WAC](#), detailing the process involved in establishing a natural resource lands conservation program. Included are criteria to be considered before any designation change should be approved.

(d) Prior uses. Regulations for the conservation of natural resource lands may not prohibit uses legally existing on any parcel prior to their adoption.

(e) Plats and permits. Counties and cities shall require that all plats, short plats, development permits, and building permits issued for development activities on, or within five hundred feet, of designated natural resource lands contain a notice that the subject property is within or near designated agricultural lands, forest lands, or mineral resource lands on which a variety of commercial activities may occur that are not compatible with residential development for certain periods of limited duration.

(2) Relationship to other programs. In designing development regulations and nonregulatory programs to conserve designated natural resource lands, counties and cities should endeavor to make development regulations and programs fit together with regional, state and federal resource management programs applicable to the same lands. Comprehensive plans and policies may in some respects be adequately implemented by adopting the provisions of such other programs as part of the local regulations.

(3) Innovative zoning techniques.

(a) When adopting development regulations to assure the conservation of agricultural lands, counties should consider use of innovative zoning techniques. These techniques should be designed to conserve agricultural lands and encourage the agricultural economy. Any nonagricultural uses allowed should be limited to lands with poor soils or lands otherwise not suitable for agricultural purposes.

(b) Examples of innovative zoning techniques include:

(i) Agricultural zoning, which limits the density of development and restricts or prohibits nonfarm uses of agricultural land and may allow accessory uses, including nonagricultural accessory uses and activities, that support, promote, or sustain agricultural operations and production, as provided in this subsection;

(ii) Cluster zoning, which allows new development on one portion of the land, leaving the remainder in agricultural or open space uses;

(iii) Large lot zoning, which establishes as a minimum lot size the amount of land necessary to achieve a successful farming practice;

(iv) Quarter/quarter zoning, which permits one residential dwelling on a one-acre minimum lot for each one-sixteenth of a section of land;

(v) Sliding scale zoning, which allows the number of lots for single-family residential purposes, with a minimum lot size of one acre, to increase inversely as the size of the total acreage increases; and

(vi) The transfer or purchase of development rights from agricultural lands, which can be used through cooperative agreements with cities, or counties with nonmunicipal urban growth areas, as receiving areas for the use of these development rights.

(c) Accessory uses on agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance:

(i) Counties may allow certain accessory uses on agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance. Accessory uses can promote the continued use of agricultural lands by allowing accessory uses that add value to agricultural products. Accessory uses can also promote the continued use of agricultural lands by allowing farming operations to generate supplemental income through unrelated uses, provided they are compatible with the continued use of agricultural land of resource production;

(ii) Development regulations must require accessory uses to be located, designed, and operated so as to not interfere with, and to support the continuation of, the overall agricultural use of the property and neighboring properties, and must comply with the requirements of the act;

(iii) Accessory uses may include:

(A) Agricultural accessory uses and activities, including but not limited to the storage, distribution, and marketing of regional agricultural products from one or more producers, agriculturally related experiences, or the production, marketing, and distribution of value-added agricultural products, including support services that facilitate these activities; and

(B) Nonagricultural accessory uses and activities as long as they are consistent with the size, scale, and intensity of the existing agricultural use of the property and the existing buildings on the site. Nonagricultural

accessory uses and activities, including new buildings, parking, or supportive uses, shall not be located outside the general area already developed for buildings and residential uses and shall not otherwise convert more than one acre of agricultural land to nonagricultural uses; and

(C) Counties and cities have the authority to limit or exclude accessory uses otherwise authorized in this subsection in areas designated as agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance.

(iv) Any innovative zoning techniques must not limit agricultural production on designated agricultural resource lands.

[Statutory Authority: RCW [36.70A.050](#) and [36.70A.190](#). WSR 10-03-085, § 365-196-815, filed 1/19/10, effective 2/19/10.]

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for the production of food, agricultural products, or timber, or for the extraction of minerals.

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