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**To:** [Staff, CAO \(PUC\)](#)  
**Subject:** Submitted Public Comment Form  
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Provide the docket's number.	IP-7159/GS-25-206 (Solar Facility) IP-7159/ESS-25-205 (Storage Facility)
Leave a comment on the docket. *	Please see the letter attached in opposition of the Lake Charlotte Solar project. PUC Docket Number: IP-7159/GS-25-206 (Solar Facility) IP-7159/ESS-25-205 (Storage Facility)
Attach a File	 <a href="#">lake_charlotte_solar.pdf</a> 42.43 KB · PDF

3/13/2026

RE: Proposed Lake Charlotte Solar

PUC Docket Number: IP-7159/GS-25-206 (Solar Facility), IP-7159/ESS-25-205 (Storage Facility)

OAH Docket Number: 23-2500-41194

Dear Minnesota Public Utilities Commission,

We are writing to express our opposition to the Lake Charlotte Solar and BESS Project planned by Geronimo Power in Rutland Township in Martin County. We urge the Commission to deny the site permits for the proposed project. We would have come to voice our views at the February meeting, but we were not mailed a notice. It apparently was posted in the local paper, but that is a poor notification method today. Geronimo has done the bare minimum to let the local community know about this project that has been in the works for years. Communication regarding this project and been very poor to those who are being negatively impacted.

I, Isaac Wallace, grew up on Charlotte Oak Drive along Lake Charlotte where this project is being proposed. My parents still live there today. The proposed project will be a couple hundred feet from their from doorstep. Today I live about 600-700 feet from the south edge of the proposed project. My wife and I have worked hard and made significant improvements to our home in the last few years. If we would have known about this project earlier we may not have chosen to invest into our acreage. We moved out to the country to live in an agricultural area. We did not move out here to live next to an unsightly industrial solar project enclosed with barbed wire chain link fencing. Our home is two miles north of Fairmont. It is an ideal location just outside of town to raise my family. We believe this solar project will have a significant negative impact on the market value of our home and all others within the sightlines of this project. There are going to be very few buyers who are going to interested in ever living next to an industrial solar plant. These are not Solar Farms they are industrial solar plants.

The Commission should not allow the solar project to consume all of this prime high quality tillable farmland (1,277 acres) that should be protected. We have little faith based on other projects around the country that the insurance or bonds would ever come through to put this back to tillable farm land once this fails due to storm damage or is not financially feasible. From a financial standpoint I can not blame the landowners. The leases Geronimo is offering these farmers ( \$1,200 - \$1,500+/- per acre) are too good for them to

turn down compared to what they can ever make farming especially today. They can essentially “sell” their farm 3 or 4 times over the next 30 years and still retain the land. Geronimo conveniently found a bunch of landowners many of which don’t happen to not have that 2<sup>nd</sup> generation coming back to farm making the decision even easier for the farmers. Without this solar play they probably would have eventually sold or rented the farm to other local farmers, but those next generations will not have the opportunity. Taking this land out of operation may also drive up rent as well as land prices around it in hopes of future expansion. This is all about dollars and not being stewards of the land.

What happens when the solar panels are hit by hail and then straight line winds or a tornado? Tornadoes typically move from Southwest to Northeast. I have concern for my property and especially the citizens of Northrop who live on the NE side of the project. If a tornado were to hit this it would significantly add to flying debris directed towards the town of Northrop. Look at pictures of other solar farms hit. Debris and shrapnel will fly everywhere. A recent example is the Wheatfield solar farm in Jasper County Indiana. What assurances are there these panels won’t fly apart and add to dangerous flying debris? When they do who is going to come clean it all up in a reasonable timeframe? Even if they are actually able to make these panels to encase all of the hazardous chemicals when damaged, how would anyone ever be able to pick up all the little pieces to restore the soil back to original condition? Who will clean all the debris out of Lake Charlotte and surrounding water bodies?

The entire project is way too close to bodies of water. I am no expert, but it is pretty obvious at some point there will be contamination of the ground and likely at least the surface waters if not also the ground water. The BESS system (giant lithium batteries) are proposed to be 500 feet from the lake shore. Will there be any wells on site to cool these batteries? Will they use lake water to cool them? Will any water be discharged back into the lake? They ensure us that all the chemicals in the panels themselves will be encased and not leach into the ground if crushed or damaged. The galvanized poles used for to mount the panels on will leach zinc into the ground overtime. Zinc is good but too much can be harmful and difficult if not impossible to remove from the soil. Are we trading on environmental power creation hazard for another? At some point something will fail and contaminate the ground, water and air.

These BESS systems have the risk to catch fire. They burn very hot. From my research the only way to extinguish them is to let them completed burn themselves out. You can’t put this type of fire out with water very easily. Firefighters will have to try to keep the adjacent units cool while they let the battery on fire burn itself out. How much pollution will that dump into the air and environment where people live? A southwest wind will blow it all

toward the residents of Northrop. There is a local grade school and high school in Northrop that could be impacted as well. A northerly wind could impact the City of Fairmont with 10,000 residents.

The proximity of the project to Highway 15 is a risk. The project will cause drivers to be distracted as they gawk over at this project during construction and after it is built. This solar project distraction will cause the intersections of Highway 15 at 160<sup>th</sup> Street and 170<sup>th</sup> St to become dangerous as people attempt to turn off Highway 15. How will glare be controlled for commuters and those living around it? It does not sound like they are planning any screening near my home or along Highway 15.

What are the long term health risks for individuals that live close to a solar farm of this magnitude? Low level solar radiation? Electromagnetic fields? How much heat will a solar array of this magnitude emit? They tell us it is safe today, but in 10, 20, 30 years what type of cancers will this cause if we live next to it long term?

This project does not benefit any of the local people other than the landowners long term. Yes there may be some short term local benefits to businesses as it is be constructed. It supposedly will create a couple long term jobs. The local residents will get NO BENEFITS from the project. The impact to us is all negative. We will not get reduced power bills. We will most likely face declining property values due to his project. This project has already put mental stress on those that are having this built in their “backyards”. We are going to have to drive by this monstrosity every day. It ruins sightlines and views of the countryside, sunrises and sunsets. What long term impacts will it have on our health and the health of our children? What will it do to our public waters?

This is unfair and unjust to the local residents! We don't have the financial ability to fight this project in the courts. We do not want to move. We should not have to move to avoid this nuisance. We have made this our home. It is an ideal location. We do not want a power plant in our backyard. Please we beg you to consider the local people negatively impacted and deny the permit for this project!

Respectfully,

Isaac & Tania Wallace  
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