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HP Team

July 17, 2025

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

121 7<sup>th</sup> Place East, Suite #350

St. Paul MN 55101

Re: Lemon Hill Solar Project

Docket 25-126

CC: Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Senator Steve Drazkowski, Representative Steve Jacob

Dear Chair Sieben and Members of the commission,

I am writing with concerns regarding the upcoming PUC vote on the Lemon Hill Solar project slated for Viola and Haverhill townships. My Husband and I are lifelong farmers in this area and the project would touch our farms in several different areas. Although I have many concerns I feel the risk to our ground water quality and erosion is a major one.

We live in the Karst Region which includes Olmsted County and the surrounding townships of Viola, Eyota, Haverhill, Quincy and several others throughout the region known as the "Driftless Area" This region is characterized by distinctive land forms like springs, sinkholes and caves, resulting from the dissolution of soluble bedrock like limestone. The area is known for its sensitive groundwater resources and cold water trout streams. Although it is beautiful the terrain around Viola is that of rolling hills which intensifies runoff. Great care is taken when farming in this area.

**Geology:** The karst region is underlain by carbonate bedrock (like dolomite and limestone) that is susceptible to dissolution by slightly acidic water. Glacial activity in the area left behind a relatively thin layer of fertile topsoil, allowing for more direct interaction between surface water and bedrock.

**Hydrology:** The Karst landscape creates a unique and complex groundwater system where surface water and groundwater are closely interconnected. Water can quickly move through the bedrock via enlarged fractures, forming conduits and leading to rapid changes in water

levels and flow patterns. This can result in streams that appear and disappear, and springs that can be easily impacted by surface pollution. Viola Township has hundreds of springs that form creeks which in turn create the Whitewater River. One of these springs that actually connects to the Whitewater River is just a few feet from my property.

**Significance:** The Karst region is important for both ecological and human uses. It supports cold-water trout streams and other aquatic life however, the interconnectedness of the groundwater and surface water also make the region vulnerable to contamination from various sources, including agricultural runoff and industrial activities.

**Management:** Protecting the karst region requires careful land management practices to minimize the risk of groundwater contamination. This includes proper siting and construction of manure storage and other potential sources of pollution which clearly includes massive deep penetration holes into the bedrock which would come from solar and wind projects.

**Unsustainability:** The deep penetrating holes required for the construction of solar and wind projects would impede into the shallow bedrock and such fractures would open the flood gates for contamination of our ground water. Removing the topsoil and terraces and punching through existing tile will also create flooding and contamination problems, along with runoff from the panels themselves, it will effect neighboring farmland and very possibly stream and well water. This could literally destroy our beautiful community. We need to be able to legally hold Ranger Power accountable in such a case.

Several years ago I believe around 2004 a Windmill company asked to do a boring on one of our farms on County Road 102, across the road from the now proposed solar substation, and they deemed this area unfit for production due to the very shallow bedrock.

I am asking for an environmental impact assessment to be done and made public, before it becomes an environmental disaster.

Thank You,

Deborah Klavetter

A very concerned Viola Township Resident