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Consumer Affairs Office  
Minnesota Public utilities Commission;

This letter is being sent to express our **strong opposition** to the proposed Lake Charlotte Solar Project in Rutland Township, Martin County, Minnesota. PUC Docket Number: IP-7159/GS-25-206 (Solar Facility) IP-7159/ESS-25-205 (Storage Facility) CAH Docket Number: 23-2500-41194

It is relevant to note that this potential large-scale solar farm is met with complete opposition from local residents and government officials. Key concerns revolve around significant threats to the greenhouse gas emissions, farmland and agricultural businesses that rely on the farmland producing a crop, property values, our regions natural beauty, contamination to our lakes, wildlife, and water systems, county and private tile networking systems and land-locking the city of Northrop just to name a few. These factors are key to businesses that are dependent on the farmland producing a crop. Not to mention this particular project is WAY TOO CLOSE to the city of Northrop. This project brings the potential for fire which would wipe out the entire town. This potential trad-off is alarming in Martin County, where agriculture is vital to our local community and the foundation of its economy. Even with organic matter being grown on the land, there will still be depletion of the lands soil and organic matter. These panels leak lead, cadmium, arsenic, selenium and other toxins into the soil and wash right into the water supply. The land is better off being left as farmland that is fertilized and cared for as farmland.

In the state of MN solar panels do not perform well. The length of daylight and the fact that we have harsh winters with snow cover and drifting which will also affect the yards, roads and houses that are close to this project along with the tornadoes and hail storms in the summer; will all be factors in the failure and the potential for damage to this site and subsequently our communities. When these sites are damaged who's going to pay to fix them? The taxes in MN are already crazy high. If there is potential for higher taxes because of these solar farms, and there is a high probability that there is, residence of Martin County can't afford them. The cost of decommissioning these types of projects are absolutely going to bankrupt our county. In 20 to 30 years it is going to cost well over 30 million dollars to decommission this project! What happens if the company sells or goes bankrupt? Martin county is going to be stuck footing the bill and we can't afford that.

We really need to think about the long term impact these solar farms are going to have on our agricultural communities. We understand that corn sold to an ethanol plant goes toward energy production but seed is still being bought and planted, ground is still being sprayed and fertilized, semi-trucks are still hauling the grain and there are byproducts from ethanol that feed livestock. Even in the off year you're still growing a crop such as soybeans. When you take up farmland for solar projects it is 100% taking those acres out of production completely and for 25-30 years at that.

Our job as citizens of these counties/communities is to protect them for future generations of ag families and businesses. We believe these solar projects will be detrimental to our communities and future generations for many years to come. Therefore, we do not want them in Martin County!

Thank you,

Nicole and Dennis Lawton

**From:** [Amanda Morris](#)  
**To:** [Staff, CAO \(PUC\)](#)  
**Date:** Thursday, March 12, 2026 8:33:47 AM

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Please deny the permit for the Lake Charlotte Solar Project!! We don't need this taking up our farmland and wrecking our community!! We don't want this!!

**From:** [Steve Loos](#)  
**To:** [Staff, CAO \(PUC\)](#)  
**Subject:** Solar project  
**Date:** Thursday, March 12, 2026 8:28:50 AM

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Hi, I am writing in hopes that you will consider denying the Lake Charlotte Solar Project in southern Minnesota. It would take 1277 acres of good farm ground out of production. I'm sure there are better places to put it. Thanks for considering it. Steve Loos

**From:** [carmburst@federatedwildblue.com](mailto:carmburst@federatedwildblue.com)  
**To:** [Staff, CAO \(PUC\)](#)  
**Subject:** lake charlotte solar  
**Date:** Thursday, March 12, 2026 8:28:47 AM

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Hello, as a life long resident of Martin County, I would strongly urge you to not approve the Lake Charlotte Solar Project. I feel it will be an envirommental nightmare, a total eyesore, and only a few land owners will benefit while the rest of will be stuck with the mess! Please do not approve this project!!!  
Charles Armbrust, Fairmont,mn

Please deny the permit for the lake Charlotte project today.  
Very close to two lakes with many residents having this across the road from them.  
Also the habitat of the wildlife in around will be disturbed.  
Have they looked at land west of Truman heading towards Trimont? Lots of open  
space with very few residents. Please consider no...  
ThankYou, Linda Maday  
Fairmont, Mn

**From:** [Samantha Egeness](#)  
**To:** [Staff, CAO \(PUC\)](#)  
**Subject:** Lake charlotte solar Powers  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 11, 2026 10:17:14 PM

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I encourage you to deny the permit for solar panel build. Our farming community, multigenerational families living in the same counties and future lake preservations need your help, not solar panels. What an ugly way to destroy what beautiful land Minnesota has to offer. Once these grounds are switch to solar panels, they'll never be used as farm land again, raising food insecurity and future jobs.

Please for the love of land, deny the permit!

**From:** [Kelsey Deling](#)  
**To:** [Staff, CAO \(PUC\)](#)  
**Subject:** Lake Charlotte Solar Project Written Concern  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 11, 2026 9:20:52 PM

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**Docket Numbers**

[25-205](#)

**Related Docket Number**

[25-206](#)

**Project Name**

Lake Charlotte Solar Project

**Applicant**

Lake Charlotte Solar, LLC

**Location**

Martin County

**Description**

Lake Charlotte, LLC proposes to construct the 150 MW Lake Charlotte Solar Facility and 150 MW / 600-megawatt hour (MWh) Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) in Rutland Township, Martin County, Minnesota.

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To whom it may concern for the Lake Charlotte Solar Project written concern -----

My name is Kelsey Deling, and I live near the proposed site for this solar project. I am voicing my concerns tonight to strongly oppose the approval of this solar farm and battery energy storage facility.

First, the proximity of this project to my home and property is a major concern. My family chose to live in this area because of the quiet rural setting and open farmland. Have lived next to this proposed solar farm site since I was born. It's where I grew up with my family, my grandparents farm just a mile down the road, and now I own a place I consider home. Placing a large industrial solar facility so close to homes fundamentally changes the character of our community. Instead of open fields and farmland, we would be surrounded by rows of panels, fencing, equipment, and infrastructure that simply do not belong in a residential rural area.

Second, this project would take a large amount of prime farmland out of production. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, prime farmland is a limited and valuable resource that should be protected for long-term agricultural use. Our community

relies on agriculture not only for local food production but also as the backbone of our local economy. Once farmland is converted to an industrial solar site, it may be tied up for 30 years or more. That is an entire generation where that land will no longer be producing crops or supporting local agriculture.

Another serious concern is the potential impact on property values. Many of us have invested our life savings into our homes and land. Numerous residents worry that living next to a large solar facility could make our properties less desirable to future buyers. If property values decrease, homeowners will be unfairly forced to absorb that financial loss while the developer profits from the project.

Additionally, the proposed battery storage facility raises safety concerns. Large-scale battery storage systems have experienced fires and safety incidents in other locations, and many rural fire departments are not equipped to deal with these types of industrial emergencies. Bringing this type of infrastructure into a rural residential and agricultural area adds unnecessary risk.

I understand the importance of renewable energy, but the location of these projects matters. Solar development should prioritize rooftops, commercial buildings, parking lots, brownfields, and other already-developed areas instead of converting productive farmland and placing industrial facilities next to people's homes.

For these reasons—the proximity to homes, the permanent loss of prime farmland, the potential decline in property values, and safety concerns—I respectfully ask the Commission to deny the site permits for this project.

Thank you for your time and for considering the concerns of the residents who live here and will be directly affected by this decision.

### **Should the Commission issue a site permit for the proposed solar project?**

No, the Commission should not issue a site permit for the proposed solar project.

While renewable energy is important, placing a large-scale solar facility on productive land raises several concerns. Many proposed solar sites are located on **prime agricultural land**, which removes land from food production for decades. According to the **United States Department of Agriculture**, prime farmland is a limited resource and is important for long-term food security.

Solar farms also significantly change the **rural landscape and character of the community**. Large industrial solar arrays can cover hundreds or thousands of acres and may negatively impact nearby property owners' views, property values, and quality of life.

There are also concerns regarding **stormwater runoff, soil compaction, and land restoration** after the project's life span. Solar projects typically operate for **25–35 years**, and there is uncertainty about whether land will truly be restored to productive farmland

afterward.

In addition, better alternatives exist. Solar installations should prioritize **rooftops, commercial buildings, brownfields, landfills, and already-developed areas** instead of removing productive agricultural land from use.

### **Should the Commission issue a site permit for the proposed battery energy storage?**

No, the Commission should not issue a site permit for the proposed battery energy storage system at this location.

Battery energy storage systems pose **safety and environmental concerns**, particularly those using lithium-ion technology. Incidents involving battery storage systems have resulted in **thermal runaway fires**, which can be extremely difficult to extinguish and may release toxic gases.

For example, the **Moss Landing Battery Plant Fire** highlighted potential risks associated with large battery storage facilities.

These systems also raise concerns regarding:

- **Fire safety for nearby residents and first responders**
- **Potential chemical contamination** in the event of a failure
- **Noise from cooling systems and equipment**
- **Visual and industrial impacts in rural areas**

Unless located in an industrial zone far from residential and agricultural areas, battery storage projects should be carefully reconsidered.

### **If granted, what additional conditions or requirements should be included in the site permits?**

I strongly oppose the solar project and hope it is not granted, but if the Commission does grant permits, strict conditions should be included to protect landowners, the environment, and the community.

Recommended conditions include:

#### **1. Agricultural Land Protection**

- Avoid development on **prime farmland** whenever possible.
- Require soil protection plans to prevent compaction and erosion.

#### **2. Decommissioning Requirements**

- Require a **fully funded decommissioning bond** that guarantees removal of all solar panels, equipment, and foundations at the end of the project.

- Ensure land is restored to **pre-project agricultural condition**.

### **3. Setbacks and Screening**

- Require large setbacks from homes, roads, and property lines.
- Require vegetative screening such as trees and natural buffers.

### **4. Fire and Safety Standards**

- Require detailed **emergency response plans** for the battery storage system.
- Provide training and equipment support for local fire departments.

### **5. Noise and Visual Impact**

- Require strict limits on operational noise levels.
- Limit lighting and require downward-facing lights to reduce nighttime disturbance.

### **6. Environmental Monitoring**

- Ongoing monitoring of **stormwater runoff, soil conditions, and wildlife impacts**.

### **7. Local Control**

- Require periodic review by the county or township to ensure compliance with permit conditions.

Again, thank you for your time and consideration of the concerns of the residents who live here and will deeply be affected by the Lake Charlotte Solar Farm if it does get granted.

Kelsey Deling

**From:** [Beth Kittleson](#)  
**To:** [Staff, CAO \(PUC\)](#)  
**Subject:** Lake Charlotte Solar Project (BESS Project)  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 11, 2026 9:07:50 PM

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Hello!

I write today to encourage denying the permit for the Lake Charlotte Solar Project (BESS Project)

Many many people in our community are not for this project, they have many answers they feel are not getting answered, and those who live close to the location are worried about how this will impact their daily lives.

Once our farmland is gone, or depleted of all its life we can't get that back...  
It'll be a sad day when we have all sorts of solar farms but not enough land to grow the basic goods we need to survive...

I'm not against having them, but don't take the land, not near the lakes, not harming the wildlife.

Please help stop this!

Thank you.

Beth Kittleson  
Martin County, MN Resident

**From:** [Mackenzie Freeman](#)  
**To:** [Staff, CAO \(PUC\)](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment – Request to Deny Site Permit for Lake Charlotte Solar Project (Project No. 16339)  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 11, 2026 8:42:29 PM

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Dear Minnesota Public Utilities Commission,

I am writing to submit a public comment regarding the proposed Lake Charlotte Solar Project (Project No. 16339).

While renewable energy development is an important part of Minnesota's energy future, I respectfully urge the Commission to deny the site permit for this project as currently proposed.

Large-scale solar installations of this magnitude can have significant and lasting impacts on rural communities, agricultural land, wildlife habitat, and local infrastructure. In particular, I am concerned that the project could permanently convert productive farmland into industrial use and alter the character of the surrounding community.

Additionally, it is important that projects approved by the Commission demonstrate clear community benefit while minimizing environmental and land-use impacts. Based on the information currently available, I am not confident that this proposal sufficiently addresses these concerns or reflects the priorities of local residents and landowners.

I am also concerned about the potential health and safety implications for residents living near the proposed project site. Several homes are located in very close proximity to the planned solar installation. Large-scale solar facilities include extensive electrical infrastructure such as inverters, transformers, and high-voltage collection systems that can generate noise, electromagnetic fields, and increased fire risk. Residents living nearby should not be placed in a position where their quality of life or sense of safety may be affected by industrial-scale energy infrastructure. Greater setbacks and more thorough evaluation of potential health and safety impacts should be required before any project of this scale is considered appropriate near existing homes.

Another concern is the potential fire risk associated with large-scale solar facilities. Solar arrays contain extensive electrical equipment, including inverters, transformers, and high-voltage wiring that operate continuously. If a fire were to occur, it could be difficult for local rural fire departments to respond safely and effectively, especially given the electrical hazards present. In addition, firefighting efforts at solar facilities may create contaminated runoff if damaged panels release materials during a fire event. This raises concerns about potential impacts to nearby soil, groundwater, and surrounding agricultural land.

Finally, the long term environmental impact of solar panel disposal and site restoration should be carefully considered. Solar panels have a limited lifespan, typically around 25–30 years. At the end of that period, panels must be properly removed and recycled or disposed of, and there

is growing concern nationwide about the capacity of recycling systems to manage large volumes of retired panels. Without clear, enforceable decommissioning and financial assurance plans, communities could be left with long term environmental liabilities or abandoned infrastructure. These long term impacts should be fully addressed before permitting a project of this scale.

Minnesota can and should continue expanding renewable energy, but that development must be balanced with responsible land stewardship and meaningful consideration of community impacts.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission deny the site permit for the Lake Charlotte Solar Project.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public input.

Sincerely,  
Mackenzie Freeman, RN, BSN, PHN  
Fairmont, Martin County, MN  
[M93freeman@gmail.com](mailto:M93freeman@gmail.com)

**From:** [Jorja Wokasch](#)  
**To:** [Staff, CAO \(PUC\)](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: Lake Charlotte wi d farm  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 11, 2026 7:22:05 PM

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More info on the project below:

<https://puc.eip.mn.gov/web/project/16339>

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**From:** Jorja Wokasch <j-rwokasch@live.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 11, 2026 7:20:19 PM  
**To:** jessica.livingston@state.mn.us <jessica.livingston@state.mn.us>  
**Subject:** Lake Charlotte wi d farm

Please deny this request. TY

Lake Charlotte proposes to construct the Lake Charlotte Solar Facility (Solar Facility) and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), in Rutland Township, Martin County, Minnesota. The Solar Facility is proposed as a solar energy conversion facility with a 150-megawatt (MW) alternating current (AC) nameplate capacity. The associated BESS will consist of a stand-alone structure with a 150 MW / 600-megawatt hour (MWh) nameplate capacity and ancillary support infrastructure.

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