

From: [Jaclyn Litfin](#)
To: [Staff, CAO \(PUC\)](#)
Subject: Public Comment re: Benton Solar Nextera
Date: Friday, September 12, 2025 2:25:31 PM

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Hello!

In addition to my public comment at the public hearing, I am reaching out with additional comment regarding the proposed Benton Solar project. Our community has been highly engaged throughout this process and have submitted comments at each stage to express our deep concern and opposition to the project, particularly in areas that are directly adjacent to homes and established existing neighborhoods.

1. 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 in its current location. While I support renewable energy development in appropriate areas, this project would be located directly adjacent to residential homes and neighborhoods, drastically altering the landscape and negatively impacting the quality of life for nearby residents.

The proposed site is currently zoned for agricultural use, and that is exactly what the community expects and relies on — open farmland and rural character, not industrial-scale infrastructure.

People who live in this area have made long-term commitments to their homes, with the reasonable belief that the land around them would remain consistent with agricultural use. A solar installation of this size is fundamentally incompatible with that expectation and how we see the community around our homes.

Another option would be to not put the solar fields or hubs across from neighborhoods and only run underground wiring to connect the project together- this would be responsible development honoring the input of the local established community.

2. Should the Commission issue a route permit for the proposed transmission line? If granted, what additional conditions or requirements should be included in the site and route permits for the proposed project?

No, the Commission should not issue a route permit in the areas adjacent to existing residential homes/neighborhoods.

This route poses direct visual, environmental, and property value impact that residents should not be forced to absorb.

However, if the Commission does choose to issue the site and route permits, we ask that the

following conditions be required of the project:

Construction of a continuous 8-foot landscaped berm with evergreen (foliage all year round) trees fully screening all areas where the solar project borders residential properties or neighborhoods.

I ask additionally that the requirement for the berm include that it be in place before or early in the construction phase and should provide complete year-round visual screening from ground level.

Stricter natural screening, including evergreen trees and dense vegetation meeting local standards, should be required to be included for all areas of the project as we drive to and from our homes and to maintain character of our community and our surroundings while on walks with our dogs, bike rides, and local feel/ aesthetic, limit impact to sales of homes, etc. Tall trees at time of planting. Trees take forever to grow, if they survive, in our soil.

Please include strict enforcement and long-term maintenance of these visual barriers, with binding commitments from the solar company.

I feel that these asks are reasonable of a large project such as this, especially given other local projects are behind stronger screening than what has been proposed.

I have attached a photo of a berm example from another project in nearby Sherburne County that illustrates how effective a project behind a tall berm can be. This is a good example of the year round screening and immediate screening mitigation I am asking be required of the company. Tall grasses will die off most of the year, trees will take decades before they effectively screen- this is a solution that would fully screen from day of installation.

I've also included photos taken from my home that show the current view(s) at ground level, which would be permanently changed if this project is approved.

This project should not be sited within close proximity to people's homes, and community should not be asked to shoulder the impacts of an industrial energy project and changed land use.

I am asking for responsible development, where the community impacts are heard and are required to be fully mitigated by the developer.

I urge the Commission to deny the permitting in the current form. But if you move forward with approval, please require the strongest possible conditions for screening to protect those of us who live here.

Thank you for your time,

Sincerely,
Jaclyn Litfin







