

Written Public Comments Received on the
Scope of the Environmental Assessment for the
Lake Charlotte Solar Project
Docket No. IP-7159/GS-25-206 (Solar Facility) IP-7159/ESS-25-205 (BESS Facility)

Public Comments Received by Staff

Local Government

1. Martin County

General Public

1. Bryan Gregor
2. Steve and Kathy Fosness
3. Makayla Nepp

Public Comments Electronically Filed in eDockets

Minnesota State Agencies

Agency	eDockets Number
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	20259-223095-01 20259-223095-02
Minnesota Department of Transportation	20259-223056-01

General Public

Agency	eDockets Number
Brenda and Roger Kotewa	20259-223150-01
Jacy Kosbab	20259-223111-01
Jennifer Moeller	20259-223059-01
Dallyn and Debra Kotewa	20259-223061-01
Tyler Utesch	20259-222871-01
Dennis Lawton	20259-222773-01

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Good Morning Jessica – I just left you a voice mail message regarding the Rutland Solar Project in Martin County – Fairmont MN and I have some questions regarding setbacks. I am also going to be placing a written comment with the PUC as a reminder to abide by the setbacks for the location(s) of the solar panels mainly in preference to residences and protected waters. My direct number is 507.238.3137. I look forward to your call. Thanks Pam



PAM FLITTER

Planning & Zoning Director
Planning & Zoning

P: 507-238-3137

F: 507-238-5772

E: Pam.Flitter@co.martin.mn.us

201 Lake Avenue #104 | Fairmont, MN 56031

www.co.martin.mn.us

From: [Bryan Gregor](#)
To: [Livingston, Jessica \(She/Her/Hers\) \(PUC\)](#)
Subject: Lake Charlotte Solar Project
Date: Sunday, September 7, 2025 8:17:02 AM

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Ms. Livingston;

I was present for the meeting in Fairmont. In regards to the requested public comment I would like to remind the commission of the presence of the Blanding Turtle here in Martin County. They are listed as rare and threatened and have been found on the same waterway system that Lake Charlotte belongs to. I also own property on the same chain of lakes, Martin Lake. My assumption is that the PUC has already researched this issue, but I want to remind them of their presence. As a retired pharmacist and a recognized conservationist in the county, it is my belief that there is substantial risk of the development so close to our bodies of water in the county. A much greater setback from the lake may reduce some of the extent of this risk. It is not in my backyard, I suspect my concerns will not be heard, and I'm past the age of "fighting city hall, state government, and large corporations". I just hope for one time common sense prevails.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Bryan Gregor

1416 175th Ave.

Fairmont, MN 56031

From: stevefosness@gmail.com
To: [Livingston, Jessica \(She/Her/Hers\) \(PUC\)](#)
Subject: DOC# IP-7159/GS-25-206
Date: Monday, September 1, 2025 10:00:13 AM

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We strongly oppose the solar field scheduled for Rutland Township in Martin County Minnesota.

Steve & Kathy Fosness
PO Box 505
Fairmont, MN 56031
507.230.1532
stevefosness@gmail.com
VETERANS STRENGTHENING AMERICA

Good evening,

I am Makayla Nepp from Faribault County. I found out about this meeting yesterday afternoon as someone from our area reached out to me and told me I should share some of the knowledge I have found over the last few months of digging deep into these solar farms, but I wasn't able to rearrange my schedule to make it so thank you Nicole for reading this for me.

I farm and my husband also runs a metal shop in Winnebago. We live 1 mile east of Huntley so not insanely far from this solar project that you guys are talking about tonight. We have been dealing with these solar "farms" here in this county for awhile now and the first 1000 acres got approved this summer by the PUC. The public hearing meeting was not "shall we say advertised well" but last minute a neighbor showed us their letter and we got about 25 to 30 people to that meeting. We did get to speak and we asked the solar company a bunch of questions and shared our concerns. I am also an EMT in Winnebago and my husband is a fireman so we have a lot of concerns about the BESS system and the solar panels themselves in regard to safety being right off a busy highway (yes I know there are some set backs but you get what I mean.) Anywho, once that meeting was over, a few of us also wrote some written comments but ultimately this early summer, it was approved by the PUC. There is another 1700 acres in the works just south of this first project and they are also working on a pretty big project south of the gun club a couple miles and it goes south pretty far as well. Im guessing this one is about 2000 acres because its twice the size of the thousand acre one that just got approved. Since the original meeting we had back this spring, I have started to do a lot of research on these solar panels. I have asked the solar company many many questions and they don't like to be very specific. Or they change their answers. For example, at our public hearing meeting this spring, I asked the company, in the happenstance of a field fire... lets say south of these solar panels with a south wind pushing the fire north, what kind of situation would that lead to once the fire gets into the solar farm. Their answer was "solar panels don't burn because they are metal and glass so basically, they'll help stop fires." ok sounds like a good answer. We then had a meeting with the solar company the day before they went to the PUC for approval and someone at that meeting asked them about fires and if they burn and what that does to the environment if they burn and their answer then was "they pollute the air about like a house fire would if they do start on fire and burn." definitely two completely different answers from the exact same two people. At the second meeting there was a gentleman there who has a solar panel in his backyard. And he had one question for this company. "What are you doing in the state of MN. Solar panels do not perform well at all in this state." The company did not have an answer for him. This gentleman had data and everything for them from the performance of his solar panel and all they said was "our panels are better." Ok i

understand, but the sun in MN is the sun in MN and the length of days are the length of days and the snow is the snow. This gentleman said the snow very seldom actually melts off of his. So first off, they are in this state that doesn't do well with solar panels and then on top of that they are taking up very very good farmland.

Now, I completely understand land rights, and I do not ever want those to go away. So, yes, ultimately, we will say it is the landowners decision on whether or not they will sign the contract. But I think we have to be very very careful and do research on our own and not just listen to what the solar companies tell us. They are here to get contracts signed and get solar panels put up. And there are a lot of tax incentives for them to do so. The state of MN wants to be completely dependent on "green energy...i hate that term" by 2030 I believe it is. So they are pushing this stuff like no other. Here's the thing, the solar company will come in and promise all this money. These great contracts, they promise they will give money to our towns and our schools and fire departments. And I'm not saying they won't, but its not going to be for the lifetime of the project. Also, these solar companies are using our tax dollars to bid against us farmers. It's hard enough picking up new ground because of sugar daddies (I mean investors...i know that sounds harsh but the truth is the truth...) and now we have solar companies swarming in too.

Ok, so now getting into some of the nitty gritty. One thing I don't think we are thinking of is, what kind of impact is this going to have on our Agriculture economy in this area? Those 4 projects I listed off at the beginning...(the 3 in our county and this one) those add up to about 6000 acres. And this is just the beginning. But, if 10-20 thousand acres get taken out of production for 30 years or so....what impact is that going to have on seed dealers, custom sprayers, fertilizer plants, truckers, etc. This is not going to just impact the landowner. Our area is so driven by agriculture, if multiple ag businesses start struggling in our area, how is this going to impact the industry as a whole? Are people going to want to come back to this area? Also, let's talk decommissioning. These solar companies claim that there is money set aside and there is nothing to worry about in regard to decommissioning. If that is the case, why are counties working to grow their bonds? I have talked to people in our county, and they said the bonds we have right now won't even begin to touch the decommissioning costs. Another county in MN has done a little research on the cost of decommissioning and on 1400 acres it costs roughly 24 million dollars from what they found. That is a boat load of money and if it falls on the county, who is going to pick up those costs? The taxpayers in the county. Yes, we will try to grow our bonds, but how is that done...taxpayers! I have asked a couple people from our county offices why it

falls on the county and not the landowner and no one really has an answer except the fact that no one can handle the cost of that, so it ends up falling on the county.

The next thing, the solar companies claim that this will be SO good for the ground because it will sit and not have anything (but some grass) growing on it for 30 years, but doing research, I have found studies that show how insanely hard that is on the ground. There is not much for organic matter, so it loses that, it loses its water holding capacity, it loses its soil elasticity and they have also found that toxins DO leach into the soil from the solar panels and that will cause problems for future crops to be grown. I have articles to all that research (done by universities if anyone wants it.) I will leave my contact info on this so you can get it at the end of the meeting.

Next thing, the state of MN has a rule to protect prime farmland. The 1000 acres in our county that got approved this summer, was originally only allowed 75 acres because it's all on prime farmland. The solar company went around the state of MN (looked in 2-3 places) claimed that those places wouldn't work because there were some trees there, PLUS the main thing.... they said... there's a transmission line going right through that area in Faribault County so that would make things so easy, and the state said "Ok! You tried"and bam just like that they now get to use 1000 acres on just that one project. I understand that transmission line makes things easy but dang easy shouldn't be the reason why they get to eat up all this farmland. I have the documentation and articles on this rule to protect farmland from our project and I'm sure this project that you guys are dealing with also has the same types of articles tied to it as well. It probably has to, but if you want the document from ours, once again just reach out.

Another question I have been trying to figure out but the solar company will not give me an answer is this: What kind of Green house gas emissions are given off on the production end of all of these solar panels? You look at a windmill for example, they will never make up their carbon footprint. So I want to know what a solar panel is like in regards to that? I understand they aren't as big and don't need the concrete so on and so forth but on 1000 acres there is going to be a lot a lot of solar panels. What kind of emissions are created when producing these? What is their lifespan? (I have gotten multiple different answers and drastic answer differences on this question as well) but if they have to be replaced we have to take that into account also. They told me they didn't know and won't know until the project is complete and I said.... you guys have at least 4 other completed projects so give me the #'s on those and they say that they don't have that answer. If we want to have a

conversation on this so called green energy, we need to talk about the entire project not just the part that sounds good.

All in all, I understand the landowners can ultimately do what they want, but I really think we need to think this through in regard to the long term impact these big solar farms on prime farmland are going to have on our agriculture area. I understand that corn sold to an ethanol plant goes toward energy production, but guess what, that seed is still being bought, sprayed, ground is being fertilized, trucks haul it, and by-products (to feed livestock) come out of producing ethanol. And the off year that corn isn't grown, soybeans are grown! Taking up farmland for solar panels 100% takes those acres out of production completely and for thirty years at that! Our job as citizens of these counties is to protect them for future generations and I believe these are going to be detrimental for our counties for many many years to come. This is just the beginning and we are targets because of these big transmission lines they have put up. And just because they claim it's easy, doesn't mean we need screw over our county citizens, our future young farmers and our agriculture businesses weaved into these counties.

*private
file!!*

Thank you for your time listening.

And please please please continue to do your own research, there is so much out there, look up all the documents tied to this project, you can find them online just search the project name and you can find all the documentation. Ask a lawyer to read through your contract if a solar company has contacted you... before you decide if you are going to sign it and really ponder on the long term effects of these.

Thank you,

Makayla Nepp

507 525 4134

Kaylamj1@hotmail.com