

Batch E-Filing for Docket 25-88/25-89 – 14 Comments

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From: [Andrew Dierks](#)
To: [Staff, CAO \(PUC\)](#)
Subject: 25-88/25-89
Date: Monday, April 20, 2026 11:44:31 PM
Attachments: [PUC.docx](#)

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Here are my comments for the solar project.

Thanks,

Andrew Dierks
Reading, MN 56165

I question whether a solar project like this should be allowed in Minnesota. The US Department of Energy says that the status quo of the electrical grid cannot meet the future demands due to large increases from data centers, electric cars, etc.... They continue to say that without major reform and intervention that the Bulk Power System will not be able to service the demand and keep energy costs low for American citizens. Furthermore, the state of Minnesota has goals to be 100% carbon free energy by 2040 and 55% of that energy coming from renewable sources by 2035. How can Minnesota continue on that same path if that path can't meet future demand? The US Department of Energy states that "renewables cannot power a 24/7 AI Data Center infrastructure." I use this quote to bring light of the potential reality facing America today that becomes very concerning looking at long term planning—how can we power that increasing demand—or can we at all? Solar farms didn't use to bother me so much, until I uncovered all of these concerning projections from reputable organizations in the energy field. Is a solar farm like this a good use of vast amounts of farmland when it can't meet future demands? Minnesota lies in an area of lower direct solar irradiance putting them at a disadvantage in terms of efficiency to those that would be placed geographically further south and west (like Arizona where solar irradiance is higher leading to better capacity factors). A large solar farm in southwest Wisconsin was estimated to have a capacity factor in the beginning of 18% though it appears as if it could even be lower than that. With potential factors that low, is it the best use for the resources it takes and is it the best use to gain ground on increasing demand? In order to meet future demands projected by MISO, they estimate we would need to add generation at unprecedented paces for the next 20 years to cover it. When generation retirements aren't being replaced on a 1 to 1 basis, this becomes a problem. In light of all of the information given, what does the future look like? The current path of fossil fuel retirements and renewable generation additions appears to be a path that leads us to failures. The anticipated demand increase in the future is increasing exponentially to the point new additions can't keep up.

Why farmland? Rapid City, SD has many car dealerships that have canopies they park their cars under. Every time I drive by them I wonder, why don't they do this with solar panels? Why not put them in Wal-Mart parking lots where people could park underneath of them and it acts as a sunshade for the vehicle without visually polluting the landscape. Would this not be a win-win? Why not put them on roofs of buildings? Is it really that much cheaper to put them on farmland? Why not on the roof of every house? It would seem like additions like that on a large scale could make a great impact without affecting local rural economies and lifestyles.

What is Minnesota's long term energy policy and goals going to be? It appears to me that the current policy cannot go hand in hand with large load additions such as data centers. Does Minnesota need to abandon its clean energy goals to supply reliable

power? Does Minnesota need to put restrictions on large load additions if the bulk power system can't meet the 24/7 demand? It appears to me that we are at a major inflection point and a route taken must be carefully thought through. If we continue to cluster renewable sources, don't we continue to further create problems? With the technology available today, what would happen if we were at the 2040 timeframe where we have no power from fossil fuels and 55% from renewable? How would the power be supplied during the no wind, cloudy times? As a young member of the community, I fear the long term effects of rapid loss of farmland, lower quality of life, compromising the aesthetics of the area, the unknowns of energy availability, the unknowns of energy prices, and unknowns of when and how decommissioning would occur (the land would be ruined if this were to happen). As a community member who likes sitting on my back porch enjoying a quiet, peaceful night, I fear infrastructure like this will diminish that quality. I certainly have concerns about the future of power availability and cost, and I would hope that we someday don't look at vast acres of renewable energy and see it as something that never panned out. The current demand trends, generation retirements, and generation additions just don't seem to add up. Something has to give—what will that be and at what cost will it come to us as the local residents to have to deal with it? Can the state of Minnesota do something now to reduce or eliminate that risk? To me, I feel like all the unknowns don't benefit our local community as a whole to be worth the risk for this project to be granted. I don't agree with using large batteries to try to make renewable energy more efficient. What is the true cost to mine and produce a giant battery like that? Are we better off burning more fossil fuels for reliable power instead? I would urge the PUC to be extremely thoughtful for not only this proposal but all proposals and whether or not they would be the best use of the land for what they would provide back to the public. There are too many unknowns and concerns for me to have comfort level with that.

MN PUC

Jill Cuperus

24817 State Highway 266

Wilmont, MN 56185

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing in strong opposition to the proposed solar and BESS site in Reading, MN, Nobles County, where I am a resident, land owner, and farmer along with my husband and children.

I am having a hard time finding the words to express my feelings about this project, and if you know me, you know I am rarely without words. I have been very vocal at meetings about my opposition to the data center and the accompanying Summit Lake Solar and BESS project – which are “separate projects”, yet they go hand in hand. It’s hard to fathom a project this large – taking nearly 3,000 acres out of production and surrounding the homes and properties of friends, family, and neighbors for miles.

We have been accused of being too emotional about this by Geronimo, and that we don’t have “the facts.” My reply to that is: Of course we are emotional! This is our home! The land that we have lived on and farmed for generations. This project would permanently change the lives, home values, land quality, and natural habitat for the worse.

We have poured our souls into creating the lives we love out here; we are quiet, proud, self-reliant people who don’t ask for much & don’t like to cause a fuss. But we are now *pleading* to be heard. Screaming at the top of our lungs. Please, do NOT let this monster come into our community.

As for not having “the facts” of this project, we have attended countless meetings with Geronimo. We have not gotten a straight or consistent answer yet. We are asking questions that matter, trying to understand, but we never get an outright answer. So many “possibilities”, “Could be’s”, “We’ll look into that’s”.

I asked this question at the virtual hearing, but I’m still struggling to understand how this re-zoning is even a possibility. How can a friend be turned down by zoning for a hog barn he wanted to build because the neighbors said no, but a trillion dollar company can waltz in, wave some money around and ask for *thousands of acres* and this is seriously being considered? Despite an entire community of people begging for it to be denied?? The double standards in this proposal and process are astonishing. Please, make it make sense.

We have given up enough of our land and resources to wind projects; please don’t bleed us dry with this solar proposition. Allowing this project to move forward would mean choking out the opportunity for several young farmers in our area to grow and chase their dreams, my kids included.

I am not against progress or even responsible alternative energy production, but why are we even considering using some of the most fertile soil in the country for this?

Please, save our land. Protect our homes. Hear our voices.

Please deny permitting and stop this project from moving forward any further.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Jill Cuperus', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jill Cuperus

From: [Jill Cuperus](#)
To: [Staff, CAO \(PUC\)](#)
Subject: Summit Lake Solar - BESS Project
Date: Monday, April 20, 2026 4:35:18 PM
Attachments: [CCF_000567.pdf](#)

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Docket numbers: GS 25-89, ESS 25-88

Please find attached letter regarding Summit Lake Solar - BESS Project.

PCU

I would like to submit a letter of support for Geronimo's proposed Summit Lake Solar and Battery Storage project; I am very glad there are others choosing to make an investment in SW. Mn. The project would bring economic benefit to the local area during construction and future operation. The project would bring another source of energy to our area, which would diversify our potential available power. The project is to be located on agriculture farmland in which I have no issue with as it creates another source of income just like adding an additional crop, Corn, Soybeans, Solar. Which helps spread risk by diversifying another income source. I am a participating landowner and have made that choice freely like all the other landowners, who have chosen to have their land also available for this project. I will be living within the project and don't believe that my quality of life will be negatively affected by the project. The sun will rise and set; the moon and stars will still shine. The school bus will continue to pickup and drop off kids; the mail will still be delivered along with all other freight deliveries. Our outdoor activities will continue with flowers and garden work, our outdoor grill will still serve great food, our lawn chairs will still be comfortable, our lives will have very little change if any. There are numerous solar sites across MN. Located in different settings all seem to have been adapted by those communities. Those sites also seem to be well maintained and are not as unappealing to look at as a poorly maintained property. I will strongly support this project and would recommend granting your permit approval.

Mike Harberts

From: [Mike & Lois Harberts](#)
To: [Staff, CAO \(PUC\)](#)
Subject: Geronimo Power
Date: Monday, April 20, 2026 11:03:23 AM
Attachments: [PUC.docx](#)

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From: [Dave Christians](#)
To: [Staff, CAO \(PUC\)](#)
Subject: docket number 26-89 Summit Lake Solar
Date: Monday, April 20, 2026 10:53:55 PM

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Hello-I am writing to comment on the Summit Lake Solar project near Reading, MN. I would request a complete environmental study be completed for this project. One area of the project floods (across 266 to the west) when there is any amount of rain. This project takes almost 2000 acres of farm land out of production which is not good for the agricultural economics of the area.

The set-backs of 300 feet from nonparticipating acreages is not appropriate. We have snow and wind in the area and the set-back is not enough - a single blade of grass will hold snow in the right conditions. University of Minnesota Extension windbreak information says " For example, a windbreak with a height of 10 feet will reduce downwind wind speed for a distance of 100 to 300 feet.-<https://extension.umn.edu/agroforestry/windbreaks#height-1740160>.

The diagrams presented at the most recent PUC meeting indicated there would be vegetative screening - there is no way the trees they propose will be of any size to "hide" the solar panels - I have 10 year old blue spruce trees that are just 5 feet tall and 15 year old ash trees that had just turned into nice shade trees (of course they are now dying from ash borer).

The solar panels will create heat islands in the area
(<https://www.nature.com/articles/srep35070>).

The biggest problem will be the BESS battery system and the noise and hazards associated with the battery system. They can be required to do noise modeling, but that does nothing to contain the noise. At the PUC meeting, the one speaker admitted the PUC does no monitoring and that people need to report problems. That's just not right.

I hope you deny this solar farm - inappropriate placement on agricultural land and near a population of Reading and many acreages. Solar is not the most efficient energy generation system. I anticipate in the not too distant future there will be a different more efficient energy generation source available (as demonstrated overseas with sand batteries - <https://technologicinnovation.com/2025/09/02/sand-batteries-explained-the-future-of-affordable-sustainable-energy-storage/>) This is not the time to allow this solar farm and BESS battery system (especially upon learning the batteries only last 4 hours - we know from the wind turbines there are many times the turbines are down longer than 4 hours).

Sincerely - Judy Christians, 19503 160th St., Wilmont, MN 56185 507-329-1126
dchristi185@gmail.com

From: [PAULETTE SJOGREN](#)
To: [Staff, CAO \(PUC\)](#)
Subject: Docket numbers25-89
Date: Monday, April 20, 2026 11:31:03 AM

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To Who Concerns

I I would like to warn our state to take more good farmland out of production for more solar panels. This land can not be replaced and the damage done to the land can not be undone. I would like to see if we could get an EIN study done. I am afraid that a multi-billion corporation would rather pay fines than fix problems. We have several farms and ranchers in the area and our water is precious to us.

Personally I would like to see them move to a business area and leave the farm land as is.

My home is close by and I do not believe no harm will be done. We moved to a small town to get away from noise and lights and now it follows us.

Please stop this for the sake of so many of us and protect our land and our water and wildlife.

Sincerely

Paulette and Scott Sjogren

From: Nolan Rogers <nrogers_17@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, April 20, 2026 1:26 PM
To: Weaver, Sam (PUC) <Sam.Weaver@state.mn.us>
Subject: Summit Lake Solar

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I believe solar panels are a smart investment for [Summit Lake Township](#) because they provide a reliable source of clean, renewable energy while working alongside our strong agricultural roots. In a farming community like ours, solar installations can be thoughtfully integrated with existing operations, especially by allowing sheep to graze beneath and around the panels. This approach helps manage vegetation naturally, reduces maintenance costs, and gives local producers an additional income stream without taking away from agricultural productivity. With rising energy costs and a deep commitment to working the land, solar offers a practical way to strengthen both sustainability and the local farm economy.

-Nolan Rogers

From: [Wufoo](#)
To: [Staff, CAO \(PUC\)](#)
Subject: Submitted Public Comment Form
Date: Monday, April 20, 2026 11:23:19 AM

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Name *	Stephanie Appel
Address	☐ 1666 Viking Lane Bigelow, MN 56117 United States
Phone Number	(507) 360-6319
Email	stephanie.joy.appel@gmail.com
Provide the docket's number.	25-88/25-89

Leave a comment on the docket. *

I am writing to express my opposition to the approval of a permit for the proposed solar energy generating system, as well as the associated battery energy storage system.

While I recognize the importance of developing renewable energy sources, I have significant concerns about the potential impacts of this project on the surrounding community and environment. These concerns include, but are not limited to, land use compatibility, visual impact, potential noise, safety risks associated with battery storage, and the long-term effects on property values and local ecosystems.

The proposed battery energy storage system, in particular, raises serious safety considerations. Incidents involving battery fires and hazardous material releases in similar facilities highlight the need for extreme caution. I am not confident that sufficient safeguards have been demonstrated to protect nearby residents and infrastructure.

Additionally, the scale and location of the solar installation is NOT appropriate use if prime Minnesota farm ground. It is important that development decisions reflect the character of the community and carefully weigh the benefits against potential drawbacks. In this case, I believe the negative impacts outweigh the anticipated benefits.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Commission to deny the permit applications for both the solar energy generating system and the battery energy storage system.

From: [Wufoo](#)
To: [Staff, CAO \(PUC\)](#)
Subject: Submitted Public Comment Form
Date: Monday, April 20, 2026 11:37:06 AM

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Name * Emily Andersen

Provide the docket's number. 25-88, 25-89

Leave a comment on the docket. *

I believe we shouldn't allow the solar panels or their batteries at all in Nobles county. This county is built on agriculture. This whole world was built on agriculture, without it we wouldn't be alive today. The USDA released a report in February 2026 that showed Minnesota was down 1300 farms and 100,000 acres of farm ground and you want to take more land out of production for solar panels? They're not actually as sustainable as you think it is. I don't understand why all of you think that money is more important than the earth we live on. God only created one with limited land and you want to ruin it to line your pockets? What about your future generations? What about my future generations? I live with my fiance near Reading, where he farms with his family. Someday when we have kids we dream that they'll be able to farm alongside him but if you continue to push for our good ground to be developed then you're taking away their futures before they're even born. You're doing that to every young farming family in our community. Please think about the long term impact this could have on the planet and the people that inhabit it. Please stop trying to ruin Gods creation. We need to protect this earth while we can. Please put a stop to this. Think about your families and ours. The more of these things that get built and take out nature, the faster you're changing the future of this planet, it's not for the better either. I've always heard "invest in land, they're not making more of it". I think that's a valuable saying that people think means to buy ground, section it off and sell it to developers but the older I get and the more I see this good ground get developed, I believe it means buy land and protect it. Do what God intended with it, plant a seed that grows from the nutrients in the soil, then harvest it to feed and fuel the world. Just food for thought. Please do your part to protect future generations and the future of agriculture.

One last thing, if we absolutely need solar panels then why can't they go on roofs or over already developed parking lots? That makes more sense to me.

From: [Wufoo](#)
To: [Staff, CAO \(PUC\)](#)
Subject: Submitted Public Comment Form
Date: Monday, April 20, 2026 11:46:15 AM

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Name * Rachel Ziegler

Provide the docket's number. 25-88/25-89

Leave a comment on the docket. *

I request that the commission NOT grant a site permit for the proposed solar energy generating system. I requested the commission NOT grant a site permit for the proposed battery energy storage system. As per MN law 7850.4400 I do not believe that prime farmland should be wasted on such projects. Additionally, the environmental impact to those living within the vicinity of the proposed site should be considered.

Prime farmland—defined by the USDA as land with the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for sustained high-yield production of food, feed, fiber, and oilseed crops—represents one of our nation’s most irreplaceable natural resources. Converting it to industrial energy infrastructure is shortsighted, environmentally damaging, and a direct threat to our food security, rural economies, and agricultural heritage.

First, this practice undermines national and local food security. The United States already faces growing pressures on its agricultural base from urbanization, climate challenges, and population growth. According to USDA data and analyses from the American Farmland Trust, a significant portion of utility-scale solar development targets agricultural land—43% nationally on cropland between 2012 and 2020, with the Midwest seeing rates as high as 70%. Projections indicate that up to 83% of future solar expansion could occur on farmland, with nearly half on “nationally significant” prime soils. Even if the national percentage appears small today (roughly 0.1–0.3% of total prime farmland), the localized impact is devastating. In counties like those in Indiana or Maryland, 12% or more of prime farmland has already been contracted for solar conversion. This removes productive acres from food production permanently during the project’s 25–50-year lifespan, driving up land prices and making it harder for young and beginning farmers to access affordable farmland. In 2025, USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins rightly halted federal funding for solar on prime farmland, stating that “our prime farmland should not be wasted and replaced with green new deal subsidized solar panels” because it exacerbates barriers for farmers and inflates costs.

Second, the physical and environmental damage is severe and often irreversible. Construction of solar arrays requires clearing, grading, and compacting soil, which leads to topsoil loss, erosion, and sediment runoff into waterways—as documented by the EPA and Justice Department. In real-world cases, such as a large Indiana solar project, sub-contractors spread sand over rich topsoil, rendering sections barren and requiring decades for remediation. After decommissioning (often not until 2070 or later), the land may never fully recover its original productivity. Battery energy storage systems compound these risks: lithium-ion batteries pose fire hazards with toxic emissions, potential chemical leaks that contaminate soil and groundwater, and long-term disposal challenges. Placing these industrial-scale facilities—complete with perimeter fencing that fragments wildlife habitat—on prime farmland turns productive, life-sustaining land into a de facto brownfield.

Third, the economic harm to rural communities far outweighs any short-term lease payments to a few landowners. Solar developers target flat, accessible prime farmland precisely because it minimizes their costs—not because it is the best use of the land. This inflates farmland values, reduces available cropland for lease, and undermines local agricultural supply chains (e.g., grain elevators, equipment dealers, and processors). Rural economies built on farming suffer when absentee investors or corporations dominate land use. Meanwhile, the energy produced could—and should—be generated elsewhere without sacrificing our food-producing capacity.

Fortunately, viable alternatives exist that avoid prime farmland entirely. These include rooftops of commercial and industrial buildings, brownfields and contaminated sites, degraded or marginal lands, parking lots (with canopy solar), floating solar on reservoirs, and non-prime rural areas with existing infrastructure. Technology such as agrivoltaics may allow limited dual use on less-productive land, but it does not justify sacrificing Class I or II prime soils. We can meet renewable energy goals responsibly without raiding the nation's agricultural heartland.

I urge you to reject any proposals or zoning changes that permit solar or battery systems on prime farmland. Prioritize smart siting policies that protect our most productive soils, support true farmland preservation, and direct development to appropriate locations. Our children and future generations deserve a secure food supply and vibrant rural communities—not industrial wastelands where family farms once thrived.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

From: [Wufoo](#)
To: [Staff, CAO \(PUC\)](#)
Subject: Submitted Public Comment Form
Date: Monday, April 20, 2026 12:37:19 PM

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Name *	Kerry Sauer
Address	☐ 16836 150 st Lismore, Minnesota 56155 United States
Phone Number	(507) 472-8278
Email	kabamm@live.com
Provide the docket's number.	25 88/25-89

Leave a comment on the docket. *

I am totally against the data center proposed in Nobles county by Geronimo there are far to many water, livestock human and land concerns around this business proposal. Our lives, land, electric costs and water concerns should come fist. Money seems to drive these projects, but they seem to only benefit the few that do not feel the direct costs or losses of health, ag business, wildlife and the livelihoods of those who have lived here first. Stay off our land and stop allowing it to be taken for wind, solar , data , battery storage and transmission lines! Keep the coal plants open and stop closing down our current power supplies. Wind energy has already caused me health issues, even if I did not sellout my wind rights. Geronimo data center and their non transparent dealings with nobles “cooperative” electric are unappreciated in Nobles and Murray county Minnesota.

From: [Wufoo](#)
To: [Staff, CAO \(PUC\)](#)
Subject: Submitted Public Comment Form
Date: Monday, April 20, 2026 1:31:59 PM

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Name *	James Soderholm
Address	☐ 18495 Oliver Ave Reading, MN 56165 United States
Phone Number	(507) 360-8877
Email	jimnkims@frontiernet.net
Provide the docket's number.	25-88/25-89
Leave a comment on the docket. *	I do not think our farmland should be wasted on a solar farm or a battery farm. I also think the setbacks should be 1000 feet from a house and they should have to follow the county regulations on the distance from the fenceline! Jim Soderholm

From: [Wufoo](#)
To: [Staff, CAO \(PUC\)](#)
Subject: Submitted Public Comment Form
Date: Monday, April 20, 2026 7:29:15 PM

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Name *	Darla Fritz
Address	☐ 20263 Lais Ave Reading, MN 56165 United States
Phone Number	(507) 360-8116
Email	darla_fritz@yahoo.com
Provide the docket's number.	25-88/25-89

Leave a comment on the docket. *

I am writing to oppose both the solar farm, battery storage and data center in Nobles County. Ag land in MN should remain just that. These project don't belong on good farm ground or in close proximity to peoples homes. I also don't feel there have been enough studies on the effects these have on the environment, humans and animals that have to live near these. Please consider those of us that would have to deal with this on a daily basis!

From: [Wufoo](#)
To: [Staff, CAO \(PUC\)](#)
Subject: Submitted Public Comment Form
Date: Monday, April 20, 2026 9:21:16 PM

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Name *	Carolyn zemler
Address	☐ 18846 180th st ADRIAN, Minnesota 56110 United States
Phone Number	(507) 472-8297
Email	carolyn_zemler@yahoo.com
Provide the docket's number.	25-89

Leave a comment on the docket. *

I am not in favor of the data center. It is detrimental to the farmers and neighbors in the area along with the town of Reading. No one should be allowed to come into our community and push their agenda and then leave without having to deal with the fall out of the project.

We already deal with low water even with rural water and there have been times we have no water due to people up the line from us filling spray tanks and such in the summer. Image having a center that takes water that people and livestock need to live. We can all live without a center in our back yard.

The heat island that data centers create also has me concerned as the temperature can change up to 6 degrees. Not good for our crops or livestock in the area.

Also the wildlife will be greatly affected and I know that eagles have nests to the south of the proposed center. Think about how much it will affect that. We couldn't clean out a waterway because the topeka shiners were present so think about that also.

The amount of employment is a joke, sure during construction there would be jobs but not for the local people, it would all be union workers from different towns, not little old Worthington.

The solar farm also needs to be stopped. Think about this, if you were to run sheep under said solar panels, you CANNOT eat the meat because it is contaminated so what is it doing to those around them, like cancer and asthma and other health problems.

This is not needed, farmers are, if you like to eat!

Thank You,

Carolyn Zemler

From: [Wufoo](#)
To: [Staff, CAO \(PUC\)](#)
Subject: Submitted Public Comment Form
Date: Monday, April 20, 2026 10:47:48 AM

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Name *	Megan Boyenga
Address	☐ 708 1st Avenue Wilmont , MN 56185 United States
Phone Number	(605) 323-8121
Email	megmariejohnson@hotmail.com
Leave a comment on the docket. *	We should not be allowing neither solar farm nor a data center. We need to keep our farmland as farmland. Allow the residents in the proposed area to maintain the life and dream they planned without being uprooted or disrupted against their wishes. This isn't anything the good majority of residents want to have.