

Date Received	Comment #	ID	First name Last name	Organization	Mailing Address	Email	Subscribed to mailing list
7/8/2021	0015	d64P0CT	Michael Tobin	North Yakima Conservation District	1606 Perry Street Yakima, WA 98902	mike- tobin@conserveva.net	True

Please see the attached letter from the North Yakima Conservation District Board of Supervisors in opposition of the proposed Goose Prairie Solar Complex. Thank-you

Attachments:

1



North Yakima Conservation District

1606 Perry St., Suite C - Yakima, WA 98902 - (509) 454-5743, Ext. 5 - northyakimacd.wordpress.com

To: Washington State Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC)

Re: Goose Prairie Solar Complex

July 8, 2021

Dear Council Members,

The North Yakima Conservation District (NYCD) Board of Supervisors wishes to comment on the proposed "solar complex" to be located in the Moxee Valley. Although we don't have any details on the design or timeframe we believe our comments and concerns should be heard. As a natural resource special purpose district we have a long history of protection, enhancement and promotion of the wise use of all natural resources within the Conservation District.

NYCD understands the value of renewable energy resources however; the placement and impacts of their facilities are in many ways more detrimental than the gains of the energy resource itself. This is at the foundation of our concerns. NYCD's concerns relate to issues such as the overall facility construction, size (footprint), change in the landscape, impacts to habitat, and reduction of agricultural lands.

First we believe the proposed facility would require a permanent change in zoning from agricultural to commercial. We understand the developer would contend the land could be used as agricultural with the solar facility. This is incorrect. Grazing could not be done at the current grazing capacity, if irrigated all cultivation practices would be impacted by the infrastructure etc... Regardless there is no agricultural practice that is viable within the same footprint as the proposed solar complex. With the actual change to a solar complex the same open spaces benefit the landowners have enjoyed and provided to the community for multiple benefits would no longer be applicable.

The impacts to habitat are one of NYCD's main concerns. The proposed solar complex site currently provides viable agricultural production as well as viable habitat that are critical for specific species of flora and terrestrial animals. A commercial / industrial site would permanently impact these lands as well and adjacent lands that act as "buffers" for critical habitat. Migratory corridors would continue to shrink in a landscape that is dependent upon large spaces. These are just a few habitat concerns NYCD has.

The areas proposed are also highly susceptible to fire. In this region fire occurs almost annually. This solar complex would not be immune to the catastrophic impacts of fire. Fire in this region is uncontrollable and no amount of firebreaks could protect them from damage. The environmental damage from the actual burn and downwind threats to human health from toxic fumes would reach as far as the Tri-Cities. At the end of the day who would be left with the remediation of the site? No developer would cleanup and restore to a natural state after such a fire.

On behalf of the NYCD Board members; Frank Hendrix – Vice Chair, Dustin Melius – Auditor, George Cameron – Member and Cindy Reed – Member, I thank you for your time and are willing to discuss the details of this letter at any time. Please contact our NYCD Manager Michael Tobin at 509-454-5743 ext 8555.

Sincerely,

Mr. Gail Thornton, NYCD Chairman