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Sent: Wednesday, January 16, 2019 3:02 PM
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Cc: Thomas G. Benton; Paul D. Trampe; Gary Skinner; Chris Yakabouski; Kevin Marshall; Timothy J. McLaughlin; David Ross; Aimee Mann; Wanda Parrish; Paulette Mann; Patrick White
Subject: Spotsylvania County SUP for Solar Power Plant

I read the SUP on the solar power plant on the Spotsylvania web site and I continue to be disappointed in the Planning Commission and their refusal to listen to the people that they represent and who are directly affected by this power project. I am not opposed to solar power as an alternative energy source, but I strongly oppose this project and the related SUP as it is currently written. Over 3000 people live near the proposed power plant which is an unprecedented number compared to any other solar power plant in the US. The Commission has received a significant amount of information provided by concerned residents in the Livingston District. These community residents are not paid for their time and have gone out of their way to help the Commission understand the significant risks of this power plant to our community. I am selecting just one topic of many problems to communicate on this message; SETBACKS AND BUFFERS. There is a very important need for proper setbacks and buffers to protect the health and well-being of the people, the environment as well as the land values for both the property owners as well as county tax revenues from the possible effects of this proposed massive power plant. The following is a brief summary of what we know and don't know about the safe operation of a 500 mw solar power plant:

- FACT; THE ONLY EQUIVALENT SOLAR POWER PLANTS EXISTS IN THE DESERT SOUTHWEST WHERE THE CLOSEST PEOPLE LIVE MILES FROM THE BORDER OF THE POWER PLANTS.
- THE HEAT ISLAND STUDY BY DEWBERRY REFERENCED IN THE SUP WAS DONE ON A MUCH SMALLER POWER PLANT VS THE 500 MW BEING PROPOSED. SECONDLY THE STUDY EXCLUDED THE DATA FOR THE CRUCIAL SUMMER MONTHS SO THE DATA IS BASICALLY IRRELEVANT. IF THE SUMMER DATA IS INCLUDED, THEIR STUDY'S CONCLUSION WOULD REQUIRE SIGNIFICANTLY LARGER SETBACKS THAN 350 FT AROUND THE WHOLE PERIMETER. DESPITE THESE FACTS THE PLANNING COMMISSION IS STILL RECOMMENDING TO PROCEED WITH 50 FT AND 350 FT SET BACKS DEPENDING ON THE BORDER. <u>THE COMMISSION SHOULD REQUIRE THAT DEWBERRY ACCURATELY UPDATE THEIR REPORT AND NOT ACCEPT THE SUP UNTIL THIS HIGH-RISK PROBLEM IS CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD AND THE SURROUNDING PEOPLE AND PROPERTIES ARE ASSURED OF ADEQUATE PROTECTION.</u>
- THE SECOND HEAT ISLAND STUDY REFERENCED BY DEWBERRY IS LARGE PARKING LOTS IN BIG CITIES WHICH IS HARDLY COMPARABLE TO SIX SQUARE MILES OF 1.8 MILLION CONCENTRATED SOLAR PANELS. <u>THIS STUDY SHOULD NOT BE INCLUDED IN THE SUP BECAUSE IT IS IRRELEVANT AND SO ARE THE CONCLUSIONS.</u>
- THE PERIMETER OF THE SOLAR POWER PLANT SHOULD BE TREATED EQUALLY WHETHER IT IS AN EXISTING HOME, FUTURE HOME SITE LOT, FARM PROPERTY, COUNTY ROADS OR EVEN NATURAL FOREST. TAKING INTO ACCOUNT RISKS OF THE HEAT ISLAND AFFECT, POTENTIAL NATURAL DISASTERS, PROPERTY VALUES, FUTURE DEVELOPMENT AND THE VISUAL EYESORE,

THE ENTIRE PERIMETER SHOULD BE PROTECTED. THE COMMISSION WAS PERSUADED BY THE APPLICANT TO ACCEPT INADEQUATE SETBACKS, BURMS AND LANDSCAPING TO PROTECT THEIR CURRENT PROFITABLE DESIGN. IT IS IRRESPONSIBLE TO LET THE POWER COMPANY DICTATE INADEQUATE SETBACKS AROUND THE WHOLE POWER PLANT PERIMETER FOR THEIR BENEFIT AND TO THE DETRIMENT OF THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE NEARBY AND TO THE COUNTY'S ENVIRONMENT.

- ANY PROJECT OF THIS SIZE AND IMPACT SHOULD REQUIRE AN ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY TO UNDERSTAND THE BENEFITS VERSUS THE POTENTIAL RISKS. THERE ARE NO PROPERTY VALUE STUDIES BY INDEPENDENT REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONALS INCLUDED IN THIS SUP, ONLY THE NET TAX REVENUE FROM THE 6 SQUARE MILE PROPERTY. THERE IS NO PRECEDENT ANYWHERE IN THE COUNTRY FOR THIS TYPE OF BEHEMOTH SOLAR POWER PLANT IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO OVER 3000 RESIDENTS. LOCAL REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONALS HAVE PROVIDED THE PLANNING COMMISSION FACTUAL INFORMATION ON THE CURRENT DECREASE IN COUNTY TAX REVENUE ALREADY CAUSED BY THE POTENTIAL POWER PLANT ON RESIDENTIAL LOTS SURROUNDING THE POWER PLANT. THIS IS CURRENT FACTUAL DATA AND WILL PERMANENTLY NEGATIVELY AFFECT THE COUNTY REVENUE EVERY YEAR. THE SAME REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONALS HAVE ALSO PROVIDED THE COMMISSION A REPORT ON THE ESTIMATED DEVALUATION OF SURROUNDING HOME PROPERTY THAT COULD DRAMATICALLY IMPACT THE COUNTY TAX REVENUE BASE FOR MANY YEARS TO COME AND WOULD MORE THAN ERASE ANY AMOUNT OF TAX REVENUE THE POWER PLANT WILL GENERATE. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO INCLUDE THIS INFORMATION IN THE SUP OR HAVE AN INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT ON COUNTY TAX REVENUES AS WELL AS SURROUNDING REAL ESTATE VALUES RESULTING FROM THE SOLAR POWER PLANT. BY NOT PROVIDING THIS INFORMATION, YOU HAVE MADE THE SUP INCOMPLETE AND NOT READY FOR SUBMISSION.
- THIS REGION HAS THE RISK OF NATURAL DISASTERS; DERECHOS, HURRICANE FORCE WINDS, TORNADOES, VIOLENT LIGHTNING STORMS, FOREST FIRES, EARTH QUAKES, ETC. ANY OR ALL OF THESE DISASTERS WILL HAPPEN DURING THE NEXT 35 YEARS IN PARTS OF THE 6 SQ MILE FOOTPRINT OF THIS POWER PLANT. NO ONE KNOWS WHAT OR WHEN THE DISASTERS WILL HAPPEN BUT A BUFFER MUCH LARGER THAN 50 FT IS REQUIRED TO ASSURE ADEQUATE PROTECTION. THE CURRENT 50 FT BUFFERS ARE NOT REASONABLE WHEN YOU INCLUDE THE FACT THAT MANY OF THESE PANELS CONTAIN THE CARCINOGEN CADMIUM. DURING AN EMERGENCY, VEHICLES AND PERSONNEL MUST BE ABLE TO EASILY ENTER AND CIRCLE THE PERIMETER OF THE POWER PLANT IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE SURROUNDING PEOPLE, ENVIRONMENT AND PROPERTY. YOU ARE NOT FULFILLING YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES BY NOT CONSIDERING THESE RISKS AND NEEDS IN ESTABLISHING THE SETBACK CALCULATIONS.
- THE COMMISSION, BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND COUNTY LAWYERS SHOULD VISIT AN EQUIVALENT SITE THAT THE APPLICANT CURRENTLY OWNS AND OPERATES WHERE THE COMMISSIONERS AND BOARD OF SUPERVISORS CAN MEET WITH COUNTY OFFICIALS AND LOCAL RESIDENTS TO HEAR FIRST HAND WHAT THEY HAVE LEARNED AND ASK FOR THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS. AN EQUIVALENT SITE MEANS A 500 MW SOLAR POWER PLANT SURROUNDED BY RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY IN A FORESTED AREA. IF NO SUCH EQUIVALENT SITE EXISTS, THAT SHOULD RESULT IN A NO VOTE ON THE SUP AND A RECOMMENDATION THAT THIS PROJECT SHOULD BE DOWNSIZED TO WHAT EXISTS IN THE MARKET. WHY DOES SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY WANT TO BE A LARGE SOLAR INDUSTRY EXPERIMENT WITH ALL THE OBVIOUS RISKS AS

WELL AS THE RESULTING NEGATIVE ECONOMIC VALUE? NOT DOING AN INVESTIGATIVE VISIT IS NOT FULFILLING YOUR DUE DILIGENCE RESPONSIBILITIES.

- CULPEPER COUNTY JUST APPROVED A 100 MW SOLAR POWER PLANT AND THEY REQUIRED 1000 FT SET BACKS FROM HOMES AND NO CADMIUM PANELS. THAT IS ONLY 20% AS LARGE AS THIS APPLICATION SO WE WOULD ASSUME THE SET BACKS FOR THIS PROJECT SHOULD BE MUCH LARGER. HAS ANYONE FROM SPOTSYLVANIA MET WITH OUR NEIGHBORING COUNTY TO UNDERSTAND THE RESEARCH (IF ANY) THAT WENT INTO THEIR DECISION? IT IS REASONABLE THAT YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO RESPOND TO OUR COUNTY RESIDENTS EXPLAINING WHY SPOTSYLVANIA SPECIFICATIONS ARE DIFFERENT AND WHY SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY REQUIRES MUCH LESS SET BACK PROTECTION.
- WHO PROPOSED THE 6 FT BURM? IT APPEARS THAT NUMBER WAS PULLED OUT OF THE AIR TO SAY THE LEAST. ANY 2 STORY HOME OR THE SLIGHTEST RISE IN THE LAND ON THE SOLAR PLANT SIGHT WILL MAKE THE SOLAR PANELS CLEARLY VISIBLE. THERE IS NO APPARENT LOGIC OR SCIENCE BEHIND THIS NUMBER AND IT APPEARS THAT THE APPLICANT GOT IT APPROVED WITHOUT RELEVANT COMPARISONS. IT IS MUCH SHORTER THAN MOST BURMS SURROUNDING MODERN LANDFILLS AND OTHER UNDESIRABLE INDUSTRIAL SITES. YOU COMBINE THIS WITH INADEQUATE 50 FT SET BACKS AND THE VIEWS WILL BE VERY UGLY. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO INVESTIGATE CURRENT BEST PRACTICES. THE SUP SHOULD BE CONSIDERED INCOMPLETE UNTIL EVERYONE UNDERSTANDS THE EXPERIENCE OF OTHER COUNTY GOVERNMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR SIMILAR SCREENING NEEDS BOTH WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE SOLAR POWER INDUSTRY.
- THE TREE SCREENING SPECIFICATION AS WRITTEN HAS NO ENFORCEMENT POWER. NEWLY PLANTED 6 FT TREES WIDELY DISPERSED WILL HIDE VERY LITTLE, ESPECIALLY GLASS SOLAR PANELS FROM VIEW, FOR AT LEAST 10 – 15 YEARS. THAT COMBINED WITH THE SHORT BURM SAYS THE COMMISSION REALLY IS NOT CONCERNED ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE HERE, ESPECIALLY NOW. THE MAJORITY OF THESE TREES WILL DIE WITHIN 5 YEARS FROM EXPOSURE TO THE NEARBY SUMMER SOLAR PANEL HEAT AND THE DIFFICULT NATURAL ELEMENTS. WILL THEY BE REPLACED? HOW WILL YOU ENFORCE THE REPLANTING ESPECIALLY IF IT IS DETERMINED THAT THEY WILL NOT LIKELY SURVIVE? THE REALISTIC ANSWER IS THE POWER COMPANY WILL CHANGE OWNERSHIP ONE OR MORE TIMES DURING THE LIFE OF THE POWER PLANT AND THE NEW OWNERS WILL NOT RESPOND TO THE COUNTY FOR THIS COSTLY MAINTENANCE EFFORT, ESPECIALLY AFTER 20 YEARS. THE COMMISSION SHOULD REMEMBER THAT THIS HAS NEVER BEEN DONE BEFORE. THE SUP SHOULD PROVIDE STRONG ENFORCEMENT CAPABILITY BUILT INTO THE SUP SPECIFICATION. AS WRITTEN THE SPECIFICATION IS WEAK AND WILL NOT BE MAINTAINED.

THERE ARE OVER 3000 SPOTSYLVANIA RESIDENTS IN CLOSE PROXIMITY AND DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY THIS POWER PLANT AND THEY ARE NOT BEING HEARD BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION. THEIR VOICES NEED TO BE HEARD AND THIS SUP AS WRITTEN DOES NOT ADDRESS THEIR VALID CONCERNS. ALL THE ISSUES LISTED ABOVE HAVE BEEN FORMALLY PRESENTED AND MOST OF THEM WITH DETAIL DATA. THERE HAS BEEN NO FORMAL RESPONSE FROM THE COMMISSION, WHICH IMPLIES WE ARE NOT BEING HEARD OR REPRESENTED. WE UNDERSTAND THAT WE WILL NOT AGREE ON EVERY ISSUE BUT ZERO COMMUNICATION IS DISAPPOINTING AT THE VERY LEAST. IT IS THE COMMISSION'S RESPONSIBILITY TO REPRESENT THE CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE COUNTY FIRST AND FOREMOST BEFORE ANY CONCERNS OF AN SUP APPLICANT. THERE ARE PROBABLY COMPROMISE SOLUTIONS ACCEPTABLE IF

YOUR EARS ARE OPEN AND IF THE APPLICANT IS WILLING TO MAKE SOME DESIGN CHANGES. I MIGHT ALSO MENTION THAT IT IS DISTURBING THAT SPOTSYLVANIA COULD HAVE OTHER PROJECTS SIMILAR TO THIS ONE AS YOU WOULD HAVE SET THE BAR VERY LOW FOR SOLAR POWER PLANT INVESTMENT FOR LOCATIONS NEAR POPULATED AREAS. THIS PROJECT SETS THE STAGE FOR THE REAL POTENTIAL OF LOTS OF UNHAPPY RESIDENTS, SIGNIFICANT RISKS AND NET NEGATIVE REVENUES. I ENCOURAGE YOU TO VOTE NO.

David Hofmeister, Resident of Livingston District, 1/15/19

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Dave

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