August 23, 2021

Planning and Development Commission Pueblo, Colorado

Dear commissioners,

The proposed solar facility amendment to the Pueblo County "Title 17 Land Use" is an applauded endeavor and your foresight is greatly appreciated.

These needed regulations will aid Pueblo County in the continued effort to be a leader in embracing the "green" movement and at the same time protect the residents of the county.

Of particular concern is:

- 1. Such Solar Facilities shall be located greater than one (1) mile from any city, town or community limits. This regulation is vital in ensuring the wellbeing of county residents.
- 2. The percentage of Solar Photovoltaic Panel Coverage in the Project Area is 65%. This regulation is necessary to limit the damaging effects of stormwater runoff.
- 3. Solar facilities shall be more than one (1) mile from an existing or permitted solar facility. This regulation is necessary to prohibit clustering and to keep the industry from separating larger projects into small projects that will abide by acreage limitations, but still could be joined.
- 4. Setbacks from Dwellings. To minimize adverse impacts upon surrounding nearby residential uses, the minimum setback of structures and uses associated with the Solar Facility, including fencing, PV panels, parking areas, and outdoor storage, but not including landscaping and berming, shall be not less than 500 feet from the nearest dwelling existing at the time the Solar Facility was approved by the County to the nearest Solar Facility structure (typically the fencing). Self explanatory.
- 5. The applicant shall inform by certified mail: 1) all owners of record of lands located within 1,000 feet of the property as indicated on the certified list of such owners provided with the application, 2) the Zoning Administrator on all notified property owners, and 3) the Zoning Administrator of the date, time, and location of the meeting, at least seven but no more than 14 days, in advance of the meeting date.

I ask for your consideration of these regulations to ensure the wellbeing of county residents and to minimize the impact to our communities and environment.

Thank you,

TA 2021-004 Exhibit B 9/22/2021

From:

oncall on behalf of planning1

Sent:

Tuesday, August 24, 2021 8:02 AM

To:

Howard, Carmen; Wallingford-Ingo, Gail

Subject:

FW: Planning Commission Meeting/Public Comment

Just an FYI, was on planning email this morning.

Thanks, TB

From: Teresa Chavez <cgrammalucy2@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, August 23, 2021 4:00 PM
To: planning1 <planning@pueblocounty.us>

Subject: Planning Commission Meeting/Public Comment

I am Teresa Chavez, a Pueblo County resident, requesting speaking time at the Planning Commission Meeting of September 15, 2021 regarding solar facility regulations.

Thank you

Teresa Chavez 2210 Fallview Dr. Pueblo, 81006

From:

Wallingford-Ingo, Gail on behalf of planning1

Sent:

Tuesday, August 24, 2021 11:39 AM

To: Subject: Howard, Carmen FW: Regulations

From: Elena Glasscock <elenaglasscock@hotmail.com>

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 24, 2021 11:31 AM **To:** planning1 <planning@pueblocounty.us>

Cc: alanglasscock@hotmail.com

**Subject:** Regulations

Commissioners,

Re: 17.168.050 Regulation – The August 18 meeting with Mr. Coffey generated concerns.

Regulation modifications that will benefit solar developers and disadvantage most county citizens.

- 1. Increase max allowable size from 2500 acres to 5000 acres
- 2. Increase panel coverage from 65% to 80%
- 3. Removed ordinance requiring 1 mile distance from Development Action Areas
- 4. Allow, by request, facilities closer that 1 mile to existing facilities (Koch property)
- 5. Allow longer distances from existing transmission lines

Modifications benefiting the wellbeing of Pueblo County residents in general or protecting the environment

1.

What regulations are being considered that will protect the urban communities of Pueblo County? My understanding is that the primary reason for land use regulations, is to protect its citizenry and the land. Most of the proposed modifications of Mr. Coffey's recommendations do not accomplish this.

On one occasion Mr. Coffey stated "I think you just made the industry happier". These regulations will benefit the industry as indicated by the many anti-regulation comments received by the commission.

Elena Glasscock 1791 Rosevale Ct. Pueblo, CO 81006

From:

Wallingford-Ingo, Gail on behalf of planning1

Sent:

Tuesday, August 24, 2021 3:22 PM

To:

Howard, Carmen

Subject:

FW: Regulations

From: Alan Glasscock <alanglasscock@hotmail.com>

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 24, 2021 12:20 PM **To:** planning1 <planning@pueblocounty.us>

Cc: Scot Carpenter < scotthecarpenter 1971@gmail.com>; Alisa DeCesaro < alisa1anne@gmail.com>; Teresa Chavez

<cgrammalucy2@gmail.com>; Talca Woods <talca\_10@msn.com>

**Subject:** Regulations

Commissioners,

Is a picture worth a thousand words? We need common sense regulations.

Alan Glasscock

**Lakeside Manor Resident** 



From:

Wallingford-Ingo, Gail on behalf of planning1

Sent:

Tuesday, August 24, 2021 3:23 PM

To:

Howard, Carmen

Subject:

FW: Solar Field Regulations

From: Sonia Avalos <savalos26@yahoo.com> Sent: Tuesday, August 24, 2021 12:58 PM To: planning1 <planning@pueblocounty.us>

**Subject:** Solar Field Regulations

Planning and Development Commission

Pueblo, Colorado

Dear commissioners.

The proposed solar facility amendment to the Pueblo County "Title 17 Land Use" is an applauded endeavor and your foresight is greatly appreciated.

These needed regulations will aid Pueblo County in the continued effort to be a leader in embracing the "green" movement and at the same time protect the residents of the county.

Of particular concern is:

- 1. Such Solar Facilities shall be located greater than one (1) mile from any city, town or community limits. This regulation is vital in ensuring the wellbeing of county residents.
- 2. The percentage of Solar Photovoltaic Panel Coverage in the Project Area is 65%. This regulation is necessary to limit the damaging effects of stormwater runoff.
- 3. Solar facilities shall be more than one (1) mile from an existing or permitted solar facility. This regulation is necessary to prohibit clustering and to keep the industry from separating larger projects into small projects that will abide by acreage limitations, but still could be joined.
- 4. Setbacks from Dwellings. To minimize adverse impacts upon surrounding nearby residential uses, the minimum setback of structures and uses associated with the Solar Facility, including fencing, PV panels, parking areas, and outdoor storage, but not including landscaping and berming, shall be not less than 500 feet from the nearest dwelling existing at the time the Solar Facility was approved by the County to the nearest Solar Facility structure (typically the fencing). Self explanatory.
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I ask for your consideration of these regulations to ensure the wellbeing of county residents and to minimize the impact to our communities and environment.

Thank you, Sonia and Tony Mondragon

From:

Wallingford-Ingo, Gail on behalf of planning1

Sent:

Tuesday, August 24, 2021 3:23 PM

To: Subject: Howard, Carmen FW: Solar Regulations

From: smpotts <smpotts@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 24, 2021 1:13 PM
To: planning1 <planning@pueblocounty.us>

**Subject:** Solar Regulations

# Planning and Development Commission Pueblo, Colorado

# **Dear Commissioners**

I am writing to encourage you to pass common sense regulations regarding the development of solar in Pueblo County. I watched the work session of your last meeting. I thought there were some very good proposals for regulating solar. The proposal to locate Solar Facilities no closer than one mile from any town or community limits was well thought out and workable for everyone.

Thank you for your consideration Scott Potts

From:

Wallingford-Ingo, Gail on behalf of planning1

Sent:

Tuesday, August 24, 2021 3:26 PM

To: Subject: Howard, Carmen FW: Regulations

From: rickavaport@aol.com < rickavaport@aol.com >

Sent: Tuesday, August 24, 2021 3:11 PM
To: planning1 <planning@pueblocounty.us>

**Subject:** Regulations

Planning and Development Commission Pueblo, Colorado

Dear commissioners,

The proposed solar facility amendment to the Pueblo County "Title 17 Land Use" is an applauded endeavor and your foresight is greatly appreciated.

These needed regulations will aid Pueblo County in the continued effort to be a leader in embracing the "green" movement and at the same time protect the residents of the county. Of particular concern is:

- 1. Such Solar Facilities shall be located greater than one (1) mile from any city, town or community limits. This regulation is vital in ensuring the wellbeing of county residents.
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I ask for your consideration of these regulations to ensure the wellbeing of county residents and to minimize the impact to our communities and environment.

Rick Avalos

Rick Avalos M.Photog. Cr. CPP Avalos Fine Portraiture 511 W. Northern Ave. Pueblo, CO. 81004 719-542-0188

"The cave you fear to enter holds the treasure you seek."

Joseph Campbell

From:

KAREN REITZ < knreitz@comcast.net>

Sent:

Tuesday, August 24, 2021 5:58 PM

To:

Howard, Carmen

Subject:

**Pueblo County Solar Regulations** 

Dear Ms. Howard,

At this time there are very vague and minimal regulations governing construction and installation of commercial solar energy.

I encourage a complete investigation, up-date and orderly development of Pueblo County Solar Regulations. This would balance the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of our community.

Sincerely,

Karen N. Reitz

From:

oncall on behalf of planning1

Sent:

Wednesday, August 25, 2021 7:29 AM

To:

Howard, Carmen; Wallingford-Ingo, Gail

**Subject:** 

**FW: NEW SOLAR REGULATIONS** 

From: Manuel Castillo <mlcastill3527@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, August 24, 2021 6:44 PM
To: planning1 <planning@pueblocounty.us>

**Subject: NEW SOLAR REGULATIONS** 

#### Commissioners,

Please continue to make the best decisions

on the new solar regulations, on our behalf. These decisions will protect our county way of life, that my family and I have enjoyed for decades and will hopefully continue to enjoy. The County is a gem that deserves to be protected. Please do not let our way of life be destroyed.

Thank You,

Manuel L Castillo and Family Your Loyal Constituents

From: oncall on behalf of planning1

**Sent:** Wednesday, August 25, 2021 7:34 AM **To:** Wallingford-Ingo, Gail; Howard, Carmen

**Subject:** FW: Changes to the proposed Title 17 Land Use

----Original Message-----

From: Deb Walters <debwalters61@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 24, 2021 10:45 PM
To: planning1 <planning@pueblocounty.us>

Subject: Changes to the proposed Title 17 Land Use

Hello Planning Development Commission,

I watch with extreme interest in the meeting in which changes to the amendments of the proposed Title 17 Lane Use were suggested. I feel regulations MUST be in place. As Mr. Coffey suggested, solar facility management will take a mile if offered and more and more. The idea that people who are out to make money will regulate themselves for the good of their neighbors is not a way for them to make money. They, like most in their shoes, will capitalize whenever possible. Thus you must have boundaries formed. Of specific interest to me was the 65% coverage. You spent much time pushing this boundary to 80%. There was some talk of stormwater runoff but apparently none of you experience this runoff. I am on 18th Lane and I already am impacted after every big rain. The water pours off the surrounding fields along Lime Road. My cellar fills every time and I must send my sub pump to work. Luckily my cellar is not attached to my house, but if more drainage occurs, my basement will be next. Please, please keep in mind that altering the land significantly does affect the neighbors. Keep in mind that Mr. Coffey is talking about best practices. Please listen to his suggestions. He is witness to how these solar facilities operate. Just because they are marketing a clean energy does not mean they are in it for the environment. Those of you who feel that solar facility operators will make positive decisions for the land and those communities adjacent to them, surely are kidding yourselves. Please keep strong regulations to protect our neighborhoods (and my backyard).

Sincerely,

Debbie Walters 1455 18th Lane Pueblo, Colorado 81006

From:

oncall on behalf of planning1

Sent: To: Wednesday, August 25, 2021 12:19 PM Howard, Carmen; Wallingford-Ingo, Gail

Subject:

FW: Solar project

From: Carmen Avalos <carmavalos@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 25, 2021 11:35 AM
To: planning1 <planning@pueblocounty.us>

**Subject:** Solar project

Planning and Development Commission Pueblo, Colorado

Dear commissioners.

The proposed solar facility amendment to the Pueblo County "Title 17 Land Use" is an applauded endeavor and your foresight is greatly appreciated.

These needed regulations will aid Pueblo County in the continued effort to be a leader in embracing the "green" movement and at the same time protect the residents of the county. Of particular concern is:

- 1. Such Solar Facilities shall be located greater than one (1) mile from any city, town or community limits. This regulation is vital in ensuring the wellbeing of county residents.
- 2. The percentage of Solar Photovoltaic Panel Coverage in the Project Area is 65%. This regulation is necessary to limit the damaging effects of stormwater runoff.
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I ask for your consideration of these regulations to ensure the wellbeing of county residents and to minimize the impact to our communities and environment.

Thank you, Carmen Avalos

From:

oncall on behalf of planning1

Sent:

Friday, August 27, 2021 7:33 AM

To:

Howard, Carmen; Wallingford-Ingo, Gail

Subject:

FW: Public comment meeting 9/22/21 Solar Facility Regulation Amendments

From: Teresa Chavez <cgrammalucy2@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Thursday, August 26, 2021 8:23 PM **To:** planning1 <planning@pueblocounty.us>

Subject: Public comment meeting 9/22/21 Solar Facility Regulation Amendments

Regarding the PCPC meeting of 8/18/21 on proposed amendments to Title 17.168.050 Solar Facilities Regulations: Of particular concern to me was: 1. The extension of the 65% panel coverage to 80%. 2. Parameters: more discussion needed on the distance between existing or permitted solar facilities. 3. Decommission/Reclamation Plan: more discussion needed to determine protection for the county and its residents against financial default of the industrial site...to include penalties, and securing a specific escrowed account to secure proper decommissioning and reclamation of the site.

I was very disappointed to hear the PCPC panel discuss many concessions for the industry, but few if any addressed the impact to the community and its citizens.

Pueblo has the opportunity to develop a robust and equitable renewable energy future if we do this right--with citizens, communities and the industry in it together.

Teresa Chavez

Resident, Pueblo County

From:

oncall on behalf of planning1

Sent: To: Friday, August 27, 2021 11:17 AM Howard, Carmen; Wallingford-Ingo, Gail

**Subject:** 

FW: Pronghorn Solar

From: RICHARD MAYO <rich\_mayo@comcast.net>

**Sent:** Friday, August 27, 2021 8:12 AM **To:** planning1 <planning@pueblocounty.us>

**Subject:** Pronghorn Solar

Dear Pueblo County Planning and Development,

At this time there are very vague and minimal regulations governing construction and installation of commercial solar energy.

I encourage a complete investigation, up-date and orderly development of Pueblo County Solar Regulations. This would balance the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of our community.

Sincerely Concerned,

Rich Mayo RE/MAX Associates 719-369-2766 719-583-8383 1310 US Hwy 50 W. Pueblo, Co. 81008 richmayo@remax.net

From:

oncall on behalf of planning1

Sent:

Tuesday, September 7, 2021 7:37 AM

To:

Howard, Carmen

Subject:

FW: Comments on proposed Amendments Regarding Solar Energy Facilities

From: Heather Maio <heathermaio54@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Sunday, September 5, 2021 8:40 PM **To:** planning1 <planning@pueblocounty.us>

**Subject:** Comments on proposed Amendments Regarding Solar Energy Facilities

Pueblo County Planning and Development Commission 229 W 12<sup>th</sup> St Pueblo, CO 81003

September 5, 2021

RE: Pueblo Regional Development Plan and Pueblo County Code (Zoning Ordinance) Amendments Regarding Solar Energy Facilities

Dear Planning Commission,

My comments regarding changes to the proposed regulations for large solar facilities are as follows on Staff Draft Rev 9.3.21:

Page 9, 5b. **Landscaping**: After "Trees shall be placed on average at 15 ft. on center and be planted in no less than three (3) rows." recommend adding <u>Planting of trees requires drip irrigation or approved means of supplemental and timely watering beyond rainfall. Replacement of dead trees <u>must be done in the next growing season.</u></u>

Page 10, 8. **Wildlife corridors**: <u>Review by Division of Parks and Wildlife designated personnel is needed for developing this plan</u>.

Page 11-12-**Ingress/Egress**. Permanent access <u>roads within and outside</u> the facility and parking areas will be stabilized with gravel, asphalt, or concrete to minimize dust and impacts to adjacent properties. <u>Suggest utilizing https://dec.alaska.gov/air/anpms/dust/control-techniques-list for ideas other than asphalt.</u>

Thank you for consideration of these suggestions.

Sincerely,

**Heather Maio** 

From:

Wallingford-Ingo, Gail on behalf of planning1

Sent:

Tuesday, September 7, 2021 11:29 AM

To:

Howard, Carmen

Subject:

FW: comments regarding new solar farm regulations

From: Dan Brown <deelby@earthlink.net>
Sent: Tuesday, September 7, 2021 9:41 AM
To: planning1 <planning@pueblocounty.us>

Subject: comments regarding new solar farm regulations

## To whom it may concern:

I am writing on behalf of my father, Cecil Brown. He owns 40 acres, just north of Exit 104 along Interstate 25, parcel 9536002003. My father purchased the property believing that Pueblo would naturally grow to the north towards Colorado Springs and Fort Carson. That hasn't happened, primarily due to PEDCO giving property south of Pueblo away to new industry. And also because Pueblo County has not assisted the growth by bringing roads and utilities north of exit 104.

I know he is not alone in his frustration. I have spoken to several other land owners north of exit 104 that share the frustration and several have given up that the city and county will ever assist in growth north of town.

Because of this, my father signed an agreement with a solar farm company to help Black Hills bring renewable energy to the city and county. Believing this might be the best use for his property given the lack of development opportunities. Most interested parties have backed away from the property due to lack of utilities in particular water. Drilling a well is NOT practical as it would require a well more than 1500 ft deep.

Now, your new regulations will deprive my father of this source of revenue, as well. I am not sure what you would be 'protecting' on his property.

Thank you

Dan

# dan brown SVCS, Ilc

1515 winfield avenue

colorado springs, co 80906

1-720-352-1066

deelby@earthlink.net

From: oncall on behalf of planning1

**Sent:** Wednesday, September 8, 2021 3:10 PM **To:** Wallingford-Ingo, Gail; Howard, Carmen

**Subject:** FW: Solar regulations:

Just an FYI! I will move the email to the solar comments folder too!

Thanks, TB

From: brenda koch <br/>
Sent: Wednesday, September 8, 2021 2:29 PM<br/>
To: planning1 <planning@pueblocounty.us>

**Subject:** Solar regulations:

At this time there are vague and minimal regulations concerning construction and installation of commercial solar energy. I encourage a complete investigation, up to date and orderly development of Pueblo County Solar Regulations. This would balance the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of our community. We have much to lose and little to be gained by the lack of regulations. Right now, the solar industry is running amuck in our county with little or no consequence for their actions, and no one they have to answer too. Sincerely Concerned Citizen's of Pueblo County, Mark and Brenda Koch 25501 LaSalle Rd Pueblo Co 81006

From:

oncall on behalf of planning1

Sent:

Thursday, September 9, 2021 4:14 PM

To:

Howard, Carmen

Subject:

FW: Solar regulation

From: Scot Carpenter <scotthecarpenter1971@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Thursday, September 9, 2021 3:19 PM **To:** planning1 <planning@pueblocounty.us>

Subject: Solar regulation

I am in favor of the regulations suggested by the Berkley Group in reference to utility scale solar installations. I feel they, as suggested are in the best interest of Pueblo County. Please stay as close as possible to the original regulations proposed.

Scot Carpenter.

From:

oncall on behalf of planning1

Sent:

Friday, September 10, 2021 1:09 PM

To:

Howard, Carmen

**Subject:** 

FW: Public Comment PCPC meeting 9/22/21

From: Teresa Chavez <cgrammalucy2@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, September 10, 2021 11:00 AM
To: planning1 <planning@pueblocounty.us>
Subject: Public Comment PCPC meeting 9/22/21

In reading through the proposed amendments to county code 17-168.050 Solar Facilities, Section "F"- Water Supply came to our attention. The code reads: "After completion of construction, water may be purchased for the purpose of washing panels if the Applicant and the Water Provider enter into a mutually acceptable agreement." Why is this contingent on "After completion of construction"? Clean panels and the planting and maintenance of a landscape screen, and fire control require a huge commitment of water. The commitment to a viable and lasting water supply should be an absolute factor in the application process AND a deciding factor in rejection if it cannot be met. Please reconsider this measure in your proposed amendments..it is vitally important in not only the efficacy of the array, but also in the safety and protection of the community.

Thank you Nick and Teresa Chavez Pueblo County residents

From: oncall on behalf of planning1

Sent: Friday, September 10, 2021 4:59 PM

**To:** Howard, Carmen

**Subject:** FW: Proposed solar code amendment – Sept. 22 Planning Commission meeting

From: Bob Leach <rwl25pueblo@gmail.com> Sent: Friday, September 10, 2021 1:53 PM

**To:** planning1 <planning@pueblocounty.us>; Kiera Hatton Sena <kierahattonsena@gmail.com>; Ortiz, Garrison <ortizga@pueblocounty.us>; Wiseman, Chris <chris.wiseman@pueblocounty.us>; greigoep@pueblocounty.us

Subject: Proposed solar code amendment - Sept. 22 Planning Commission meeting

My name is Bob Leach, and I am a Pueblo County landowner. For the last several years, I have also been involved as a consultant to other Pueblo County landowners in assisting them in negotiations of options and leases with large solar development companies. In that capacity, I have gained a level of understanding of how the solar industry works here in Pueblo, and what things are feasible and what are not.

I have reviewed the revised code amendment proposal (released by the County Planning Department on September 3) relating to utility scale solar plants and I have serious concerns with this proposal. It is my opinion that the changes that have been made since this proposed code amendment was presented to the Planning Commission at their work session in August, tweak around the edges of the proposed ordinance, but do not go anywhere near far enough.

Below is a summary of just a few of the requirements that I see as problematic:

- 1. I believe that the requirement to review and reauthorize a 1041 permit after 20 years could make obtaining financing for utility scale solar plants nearly impossible. Financial institutions involved in the construction of these plants are putting up hundreds of millions of dollars. They're not going to do so if they believe that the rules could change midway through the life of the Power Purchase Agreement for one of these facilities.
- 2. I don't believe that the requirement for a 1 mile separation between solar plants is necessary, and is in fact counterproductive. There are examples in Pueblo County where interconnection facilities are available at an existing plant, and to build an additional plant adjacent to the existing plant makes tremendous sense. We currently have at least one example of utility scale solar plants that are adjacent to each other and I don't believe that that has created any problems. Also, quite often solar developers apply for and obtain 1041 permits on lands where there is no power purchase agreement yet and may never be. So, to mandate that none of the property around the perimeter of that permitted site could be used for solar sterilizes a tremendous amount of ground from potential solar development. For example, if a 1 mi.<sup>2</sup> site is permitted, then the 8 mi.<sup>2</sup> that immediately surround that permitted site would be off-limits to apply for a permit.
- 3. I believe that the 1 mile restriction from city limit lines is also problematic. If appropriately placed with proper separation from existing residential, a solar plant could be developed within the city limits.
- 4. I don't believe that the planting of trees and placing of berms around the perimeter of a solar plant located out in the middle of the prairie makes any sense, and would be prohibitively expensive. Same with the requirement for a 75% visually solid fence.

- 5. I believe that the decommissioning requirements in this proposed amendment are extremely excessive, unnecessarily costly and will prevent solar developers from wanting to locate a plant in Pueblo County.
- 6. I believe that giving the County veto approval over the sale of a solar plant to a separate owner/operator will also be problematic in obtaining financing for development of a plant.

In the interest of brevity, these are just some of the more serious concerns that I have with this proposed code amendment. I have others. And I would like to point out that if this code amendment would have been in force 18 months ago, some of the requirements in it would have prohibited development of the Big Horn solar plant, which was an instrumental component in landing the new long rail mill at the Evraz steel plant.

Granted, there are certain issues that have arisen in recent years that are deserving of regulation of the solar industry. Specifically, the issues that I believe need to be addressed are as follows:

- 1. There have been a couple of 1041 applications that have been proposed immediately adjacent to existing residential areas. I believe that some minimum separation between existing residential and a utility scale solar plant should be a requirement. I'm not sure what that distance should be, maybe 1/4 mile. But, at any rate, I believe that a certain minimum separation should be specified. That should eliminate the need for berms, trees, solid fencing, etc.
- 2. I would not be opposed to imposing regulations regarding decommissioning of the solar plants. But in order to come up with those regulations, the solar industry should be pulled into the discussions of what those potential regulations should be. They have ideas that will work.
- 3. I am under the impression that County staff has been inundated with 1041 permit applications. Some of these have been for plants that have obtained power purchase agreements and are or will soon be constructed. But others have been on sites where the solar developers are wanting to obtain permits in order to help facilitate winning a power purchase agreement, which may or may not ever happen. This is a problem that needs to be addressed. Maybe with significant increases in the application fees for these permits so that the County has the ability to hire more staff. Or perhaps in some other way. But again, the solar industry and the local electric utility companies should be consulted as to how to solve this problem.

City and county leaders have been promoting the fact that Pueblo County is becoming a world capital for solar development. I believe that this is a laudable goal. Creating jobs, good for the residents of Pueblo County and substantially increasing tax revenues. But I also believe that if this proposed code amendment is adopted in anything close to its existing form, it will bring an end to utility scale solar development in Pueblo County. The electric utility companies and the solar developers will simply go to other places in Colorado where it is more cost-effective to develop the solar plants.

I therefore respectfully ask the Planning Commission to reject this proposed amendment and instruct the staff to start over with an inclusive process that includes landowners, utility companies, representation from the solar development industry and other stakeholders to draft proposed regulations that address the problems that we have experienced, without overregulating the industry. I believe that by doing that, we as a community could come up with sensible regulations that would allow Pueblo to continue leading the way with solar development.

Best regards,

**Bob Leach** 

Bob Leach RWL25, LLC 31000 East US Hwy 50



PUEBLO COUNTY DEPT. OF

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT



San Isabel Electric Association, Inc. is an equal opportunity provider and employer

09/01/2021

Pueblo County Planning and Zoning Commission Board 215 W  $10^{\text{th}}$  St. Pueblo, CO 81003

Dear Board Members:

After reviewing the Berkley Group's proposed changes to Pueblo County's Zoning Ordinance Regarding Solar Energy Facilities, we have several concerns and questions about impacts to both our renewable energy development potential as an electric utility, and to the County's economic development and renewable energy development goals.

Our primary concerns are as follows:

1. We need a clearer rationale for the requirement that solar facilities both be located within one mile of a transmission line and be located at least one mile apart – especially for medium-scale projects, like community solar.

2. Requiring the same setbacks, buffers, and zoning for medium-scale solar as for large-scale solar is not necessary and could severely limit the development of valuable, smaller arrays.

3. We would like to know more about the proposed 65% lot coverage limitation. This can require additional land and expense to generate a certain amount of electricity, and we are curious whether there are resource-specific considerations for this percentage in Pueblo County, in particular.

We understand the good intentions behind the Planning Commission's efforts and the Berkley Group's recommendations. We have highlighted some of the concerns that we believe could have the greatest potential for negative unintended consequences as Pueblo attempts to meet aggressive clean energy goals and become known nationally as an innovative epicenter for energy development.

We encourage careful consideration of all comments and want to ensure that the solar industry is also engaged throughout this process – especially our local developers who regularly work with medium-scale projects.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment and hope to be informed of any updates to the proposed amendments.

Thank you,

Reginal Rudolph General Manager Planning and Development

Re: 17.168.050 Solar Regulations

Commissioners,

Thank you for tackling the issues pertaining to solar installations. I have tried to stay informed on the progress of this endeavor and commend you on Regulations F.2d, F.2e, F.2g in particular.

But there are a few items in Section F: Minimum Development and Performance Standards in Revision 9.3.21 of the Title 17.168.050 Land Use Code that appear to benefit the solar industry at the expense of county residents.

## Paragraph 2c

During the June 23rd Planning and Development work session Mr. Coffey of the Berkley Group recommended a Solar Photovoltaic Panel Coverage of 65%. Mr. Coffey's reasoning was that as coverage increases the more the site becomes like a parking lot and stormwater runoff becomes a problem. See attached photo of runoff from Bighorn construction site on May 18, 2021. 0% panel coverage.

Again on August 18 there was much debate on this ordinance during the work session with Mr. Coffey with a final consensus being: "The percentage of Solar Photovoltaic Panel Coverage in the Project Area is up to 80%.

Upon review of the posted comments regarding this ordinance, there were many opponents to Mr. Coffey's recommended 65% coverage. These objections appeared to be based solely on profits per acre utilization and completely dismissed Mr. Coffey's sound advice concerning the environment.

PV solar installations consume massive amounts of land, so to improve acres/MW and return on investment, it is necessary to install more PV panels per acre called "packing". Mr. Coffey plainly stated that his recommendation was based solely on runoff considerations. Higher concentrations of solar panels would appear to be environmentally advantageous but if you put aside the financial advantage and really focus on the environment, then Mr. Coffey's statement has merit. Mr. Coffey's 65% coverage is centered more on protecting the environment from the damaging effects of runoff and erosion and not the bottom line.

The 65% PV panel coverage is an ideal coverage. This will allow for maximum leaching, fencing and landscape screening as well as ample space for maintenance and emergency vehicle maneuverability while still being economically feasible.

Requests for coverages above the 65% should be based on site characteristics and the applicant should be required to justify any increase. Criteria for increased coverage should be based on topography and percolation tests done on the various soil types within the site as well as any other related criteria necessary to protect the environment.

The burden of justification for coverage greater that 65% should fall on the applicant and should not be the commission's duty to justify a lesser coverage. I request that the commission adopt the ordinance F-2c as originally proposed by Mr. Coffey that states:

"The percentage of Solar Photovoltaic Panel Coverage in the Project Area is 65%. Requests for higher density may be submitted at the time of application if there is a clear justification. The request is subject to Zoning Administrator approval but shall not exceed 80% (no limit in P-1).



## Paragraph 3b:

Setbacks from Dwellings Residential Property. To minimize adverse impacts upon surrounding nearby residential uses, the minimum setback of structures and uses associated with the Solar Facility, including fencing, PV panels, parking areas, and outdoor storage, but not including landscaping and berming, shall be not less than 500 feet from the nearest dwelling Residential Property existing at the time the Solar Facility was approved by the County to the nearest Solar Facility structure (typically the fencing).

In this paragraph I request that the word dwelling(s) be replaced with Residential Property. Many Country Residential properties are also personal recreation areas, swimming pools, equestrian activities, 4H activities, garden plots, outdoor living, play areas, work shops, etc. These areas should also be considered as being occupied.

Paragraph 21–13 Water Supply. After completion of construction, water may must be purchased available for the purpose of washing panels and maintaining a viable landscape screen, if the Applicant and the Water Provider enter into a mutually acceptable agreement.

Washing panels is a benefit to the operator, landscape maintenance is for county residents.

Another concern centers on the removed items in section F 12 through 19, on page 11.

These items were removed due to the belief that issues were being created that didn't really exist except during construction and were properly addressed in regulations for construction.

After construction there will still be activities such as landscape screen watering, revegetation activities, panel washing, weed control, general maintenance, etc. all of which can cause noise and dust.

#### Please reinstate:

- ➤ 12. Sound. No sound above 90 db (OSHA permissible exposure) resulting from maintenance activities shall be measurable beyond the boundaries of the installation.
- > 17. Dust. No dust or dirt resulting from maintenance activities shall be measurable beyond the boundaries of the installation.
- ➤ 18. Glare. No glare shall be discernible beyond the boundaries of the installation.

  Years of behind-the-scenes wrangling leads to solar glare warning sign | Local News | eastoregonian.com
- > 19. Heat. No heat shall be discernible beyond the boundaries of the installation.

There is a great debate concerning PVHI. If it is a false belief that large solar installations will increase ambient temperatures then no harm, no foul if this ordinance is kept.

Don't let an inconvenience to the developer be a nuisance for county residents.

If solar is to be a truly "green" energy then the environment and community has to be the main consideration and not a casualty.

Please protect your charge.

Thank you commissioners for your time.
Alan Glasscock

Planning and Development

#### Mission

To promote the health, safety, welfare, and quality living environment of Pueblo County residents and visitors by encouraging compatible and sustainable land use development within unincorporated Pueblo County. This is accomplished through long-range planning, developing and implementing land development policies, as well as administering and enforcing land use regulations.

From:

Wallingford-Ingo, Gail on behalf of planning1

Sent:

Monday, September 13, 2021 10:04 PM

To:

Howard, Carmen

**Subject:** 

FW: 9/22/21 Public Comment -Solar Facilities

From: Teresa Chavez <cgrammalucy2@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, September 13, 2021 2:33 PM
To: planning1 <planning@pueblocounty.us>
Subject: 9/22/21 Public Comment -Solar Facilities

As I observed the facebook meetings the PCPC had with the Berkley Group Consultant, Dennis Coffey, and his research and remarks, I was very much encouraged by the content and extent of information he provided to the PCPC. I firmly believe that the Berkley Group recommendations should be adopted in its entirety as it provides us with a very good starting point in establishing sound solar regulations that we can amend as necessary going forward, In having this expertise, we can move forward at a pace that allows Pueblo to grow with the Solar Industry and make necessary amendments to the regulations as we grow and learn. Let's not be hasty. The industry will gladly take any and all concessions we relinquish especially if they don't have to justify them. Remember that we have what they need...LAND! By keeping in mind the far-reaching impact a Utillity Scale Solar facility could have on Pueblo and its citizens, I say start with the Berkley Group recommendations and build on them. Let's do this right!

**Teresa Chavez** 

**Pueblo County citizen** 

From:

oncall on behalf of planning1

Sent:

Tuesday, September 14, 2021 8:46 AM

To:

Howard, Carmen

Subject:

FW: Regulations for Solar

From: Sharen Hall <shallwelcome2016@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Tuesday, September 14, 2021 8:30 AM **To:** planning1 <planning@pueblocounty.us>

Subject: Regulations for Solar

Regulations are needed to protect established neighborhoods. It is important to adopt regulations to keep solar from destroying home values and the environment.

Keep solar panels a mile from homes.

Keep distance between solar fields. Do not allow clustering.

Regulations will keep the county in control of solar.

Thank you.

Sharen Hall

From:

oncall on behalf of planning1

Sent:

Wednesday, September 15, 2021 7:38 AM

To:

Howard, Carmen

Subject:

FW: 17.168.050 Solar Regulations

From: Alisa DeCesaro <alisa1anne@gmail.com> Sent: Tuesday, September 14, 2021 7:42 PM To: planning1 <planning@pueblocounty.us> Subject: 17.168.050 Solar Regulations

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to urge the planning commission to adopt solar regulations as proposed by Darren Coffey of the Berkley Group. I believe in solar energy, however it is critical to have a community-biased set of regulations in order to have a balance check on the industry interests. Please keep our community in mind as these regulations are put into place.

Sincerely,

Alisa DeCesaro

From:

oncall on behalf of planning1

Sent:

Wednesday, September 15, 2021 7:40 AM

To:

Howard, Carmen

Subject:

FW: Proposed solar regulations,

From: brenda koch <bkoch63@live.com>

**Sent:** Wednesday, September 15, 2021 7:27 AM **To:** planning1 <planning@pueblocounty.us>

Subject: Proposed solar regulations,

Hello this is Mark Koch, representing MABAPA Koch Farm and Ranch LLC. I write in support of Pueblo County adopting regulations concerning all the solar projects being proposed. I am in support of Section 17.168.050, parts F.2d, F.2e and F.2g. F.2c should be changed to 65% with 80% max. Post construction, dust, sound glare control, and heat regulated. F.3b replace Dwellings, with Residential Property. Pueblo County residents need protection from the unregulated solar developers that are doing whatever they wish to our neighborhoods without any consequence.

Thank you, MABAPA Koch Farm and Ranch LLC

From:

oncall on behalf of planning1

Sent:

Wednesday, September 15, 2021 12:50 PM

To:

Howard, Carmen

Subject:

FW: NEW SOLAR FARM REGULATIONS

From: Manuel Castillo <mlcastill3527@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 15, 2021 11:35 AM
To: planning1 <planning@pueblocounty.us>
Subject: NEW SOLAR FARM REGULATIONS

Hello our names are Manuel and Betty Castillo

We live in Lakeside Manor Estates.

We support F.2d, F.2e and F.2g as written. We want F.2c to be 65% panel coverage with 80% being max.

We want post construction dust, sound, glare and heat regulated (redlined items F.12, F.17, F.18 and F.19 page 11).

In F.3b replace the word "Dwelling(s)" with "Residential Property".

Thanks you, The Castillos

From: oncall on behalf of planning1

Sent: Wednesday, September 15, 2021 12:50 PM

**To:** Howard, Carmen

**Subject:** FW: Pivot Energy, Colorado solar developer, comments on proposed code amendments

From: Jonathan Fitzpatrick < jfitzpatrick@pivotenergy.net>

**Sent:** Wednesday, September 15, 2021 11:47 AM **To:** planning1 <planning@pueblocounty.us>

Subject: Pivot Energy, Colorado solar developer, comments on proposed code amendments

## Good morning,

My name is Jon Fitzpatrick and I'm the Vice President of Project Development for Pivot Energy. We are a community solar developer based in Denver, but we've worked on several projects with Black Hills Energy over the last few years in and around Pueblo County.

I'm writing today to share my concerns with the proposed amendments to the solar zoning code. In particular, I would like to mention a few items:

- 1. Size "buckets" for solar projects
- 2. Limitation of projects within 1 mile of one another
- 3. Restriction of projects to within a mile of transmission lines
- 4. Restriction of projects within 1 mile of municipal boundaries

Community and small-utility scale solar projects provide local ratepayers (and the utility) the opportunity to connect distributed energy resources to the electrical grid in locations where it's used - near to electrical load. By doing this, the energy is consumed near to where it's produced without necessitating construction of additional utility infrastructure.

Projects like these benefit local ratepayers. In particular, community solar projects allow local ratepayers to save money on their monthly electrical bills without having to put solar panels on their roof or property. For many people, such an option just isn't realistic. Solar equipment is expensive, and not all homes are suitable. Renters (or homes and apartments) are effectively restricted from using renewable energy in many cases, and community solar projects give them a chance to save money like their more affluent neighbors. This is an issue of energy equity.

When it comes to categorizing solar project sizes, I ask that staff re-evaluate your current classifications to more accurately reflect standard solar project sizes. There are several examples here in Colorado where local jurisdictions have recently re-evaluated their own solar zoning code (Weld County and Adams County are two examples). Their code, which was created by their staff with significant input from multiple stakeholders, addresses the important differences between various project types and puts into place thoughtful regulations to ensure projects have a path forward that respects nearby landowners.

Solar project sizes can be considered in terms of acres, but also in terms of the voltage of power they produce. Transmission projects are often larger and interconnect into transmission lines (69 kVa and larger). These projects require larger footprints, needing at least 50 acres to be financially viable.

Smaller projects - of which community solar gardens are one - connect into the utility's distribution grid. This is the same power infrastructure that is found in cities and neighborhoods. These smaller projects simply cannot afford to connect into the transmission grid, and therefore must be located nearer to municipalities and existing distribution infrastructure.

I would ask that staff reconsider their sizing restrictions to more accurately reflect solar project sizes, making more meaningful designations between project sizes. Small project could be up to 10 acres, medium up to 50, and larger could be 50 or greater. This would still make Pueblo County's code much more restrictive than that of many of your Colorado County counterparts, but would at least start to "bucket" projects according to their corresponding electrical needs.

Solar developers often bear very high utility infrastructure upgrade costs for projects that interconnect into the distribution system. Any costs for new power lines, or upgrades to existing power lines, must be borne by the solar projects. We cannot afford to build thousands of feet of new utility infrastructure for these projects, so we try to share costs between projects when possible. If a few landowners in the same area would like to host solar projects, developers can sometimes reach a critical mass that would allow the projects to proceed when a single project could not support a necessary upgrade to utility equipment. Again, I believe a more thoughtful and nuanced approach to siting should be considered.

Along the same lines, and because projects on less than 50 acres won't generally connect into transmission lines, the restriction for projects of this size to be limited to a certain linear distance from transmission lines does not apply. This is a completely arbitrary restriction for projects that do not use transmission infrastructure. We do not take transmission into account in any way when siting these projects. Please consider correcting this by adjusting project size "buckets" or changing the language for projects that do not interconnect to transmission infrastructure.

Building on the comments above, the restriction from municipal boundaries will disproportionately impact electrical ratepayers who do not otherwise have the opportunity to participate in renewable energy projects. As noted, distribution-level infrastructure does not typically exist outside of towns and cities. Transmission lines carry power over larger distances, meaning there's a real lack of suitable infrastructure once we are more than a mile from towns. This provision of the code, while potentially acceptable for much larger projects, will have the effect of preventing projects that are less than 50 acres from being constructed in Pueblo County.

Finally, it should be noted that the County has committed to becoming 100% renewable by 2035. While this commitment is aspirational, the proposed zoning code amendments will inhibit the County from achieving this goal. In all likelihood, any chance of reaching this goal will now be predicated on the county importing power. This is a shame because the solar resource in Pueblo County is wonderful, and you have many landowners interested in hosting solar projects. Furthermore, the County is able to collect increased property tax revenue from each and every completed solar project. Because these projects are often sited on vacant or agricultural lands, these tax proceeds represent a significant increase in revenue generated from the subject parcels.

I ask Staff and the Planning Commission to continue your discussion of the proposed solar zoning code to incorporate more stakeholder feedback prior to finalizing the amendment. There's work to be done to make this a good, balanced, and equitable code. Failure to do so will have negative impacts on your local electrical customers and put Pueblo County far behind other leading permitting authorities in Colorado when it comes to thoughtful and considered solar policy.

Thank you for your consideration of these important issues,

Jon Fitzpatrick

JON FITZPATRICK | VP, Project Development



September 15, 2021

Carmen Howard Director, Pueblo County Planning & Development 229 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Pueblo, CO, 81003

#### RE: Xcel Energy Comments to Pueblo County's Proposed Solar Energy Code Amendments

On August 18, 2021, the Pueblo County Planning Commission discussed proposed changes to the Pueblo County Code regarding utility scale solar facility development. As a regulated utility, Xcel Energy appreciates the need for policies and codes to better facilitate development. However, the proposed changes as written will negatively impact Xcel Energy as a purchaser of electricity from utility scale solar projects in Pueblo County.

The below summary includes Xcel Energy's comments on the proposed new Pueblo County Code Section 17.168.050. As we continue to assess the proposed changes, we anticipate having further comments and concerns to share and discuss with you.

### **Separate Permits for Utility Infrastructure and Solar Projects**

Xcel Energy constructs and operate new substations and transmission lines to interconnect new solar projects to the existing electrical transmission system. It is unclear to what extent the proposed regulations would apply to utility owned substations and transmission lines that are associated with, but distinct from solar projects owned and operated by solar developers.

Xcel Energy owns and operates our infrastructure separately from solar developers, and we need to maintain the ability to permit our infrastructure separate from associated solar facilities. Xcel Energy respectfully requests that the proposed regulations more clearly differentiate between utility owned infrastructure and solar developer owned solar facilities by including an Applicability section or definitions stating that the proposed regulations are not applicable to utility owned substations and transmission lines.

### Section F.2. Locational and Dimensional Standards for Solar Facilities

d. Such Solar Facilities shall be located greater than one (1) mile from: Any defined city, town, or other community boundary.

The one-mile distance requirement is arbitrary and would likely result in unintended consequences. For example, the EVRAZ Big Horn Solar project near the Comanche Power plant is adjacent to the City of Pueblo boundary, and would not have been permitted if this standard were in effect. This solar project was a critical factor in the decision by EVRAZ Rocky Mountain Steel to expand their operation in Pueblo. It is possible that without the solar plant being built, the long rail steel expansion would not have been located in Pueblo. This Project is adjacent to

an industrial facility on land that will likely never be developed for residential or other sensitive land uses. From a land use perspective, this area is compatible with solar development, yet this standard would prohibit solar projects based on an arbitrary limit that does not consider actual land use impacts. The current permit review referral process allows adjacent cities and towns to comment on proposed projects near their boundaries and should provide sufficient information for the County to determine the extent of potential project impacts on cities and town residents, without setting an arbitrary limit that will cause solar projects to sprawl into areas of the County where they may be less compatible.

e. Solar facilities shall be more than one (1) mile from an existing or permitted solar facility.

Similar to the one-mile distance from municipal and community boundaries noted above, this standard is arbitrary and would likely result in unintended consequences. It would result in sprawl of multiple smaller facilities creating more regional environmental impacts. It would also likely increase the amount of new electric transmission lines needed to interconnect dispersed solar facilities, thus causing additional visual impact.

f. The permit boundary shall be located no more than (1) mile of existing transmission lines (except in P-1)

This distance criteria calls for additional clarification as noted here. Not all transmission lines have capacity to accept additional energy injection. Just because a solar project is within a mile of a transmission line, it might be necessary to interconnect and inject into another line that could be farther from the solar facility. Another clarification is that the location of a transmission line, even if it has capacity to accept additional energy injection, does not necessarily limit the amount of new transmission required to interconnect the solar facility because the point of interconnection occurs at an electric substation or switchyard. In some cases, a new substation can be developed in proximity to a solar facility to minimize the amount of new transmission required, but it's not always possible or economic to do so.

Also, by requiring solar farms to be within 1-mile of transmission lines, solar development opportunities would be severely limited to only those locations adjacent to existing lines. Not only would this restriction limit the number and size of new solar projects, it would prevent the construction and operation of solar farms that are currently under development in locations that are farther than 1-mile from existing transmission lines. Adopting such measures now, after the solar industry and landowners have been developing projects for many years would have a chilling effect on the solar market, including property tax revenues

**Section 5. Screening...**The applicant shall use one or a combination of methods listed in this section, or other comparable methods deemed equivalent by the Zoning Administrator, to satisfy the screening requirements.

- a. Existing Screening. Existing vegetation, topography, buildings, open space, or other elements located on the site may be considered as part of the required screening.
- b.Landscaping. Landscaping intended for screening shall consist of a combination of evergreen trees that are 5-6 ft. in height at time of planting and deciduous trees that are 5-6 ft. in height at time of planting. Trees shall be placed on average at 15 ft. on center and be planted in no less than three (3) rows...
- c. Berming. Berms shall generally be constructed with a 3:1 side slope to rise ratio, 4-6 ft. above the adjacent grade, with a 3 ft. wide top (the wide top is necessary to have a flat area for plantings). The outside edges of the berm shall be sculpted such that there are vertical and horizontal undulations to give variations in appearance. When completed, the berm should not have a uniform appearance.
- d.Fencing. Fencing intended for screening shall be at least 75 percent visually solid as viewed on any line perpendicular to the fence from adjacent property or a public stree tright of way. Such fencing may be used in combination with other screening methods but shall not be the primary method. A typical example is the use of wood privacy fencing and landscaping to screen structures such as substations. Depending on the location, ornamental features may be required on the fence. Fencing material shall not include threaded plastic slats or plastic fencing.

A 1,000 acre solar project would have a perimeter of approximately 5 miles. The screening described would require a combination of artistic berms, mature landscaping, and wooden fencing. Requiring this level of screening for 5 miles or more would likely cause any utility scale solar project to be financially infeasible.

The comments and concerns expressed above reflect Xcel Energy's initial thoughts and on the proposed changes. As we continue to assess the proposed changes, we anticipate having further comments and concerns to share and discuss with you. Xcel Energy recognizes Pueblo County as a vital partner as we transition to renewable forms of energy, meeting the energy needs of the State of Colorado. We look forward to further discussions.

Thank you,

Carly Rowe
Manager, Siting and Land Rights
Public Service Company of Colorado (dba Xcel Energy)

Ashley Valdez Area Manager Public Service Company of Colorado (dba Xcel Energy)