

Re:BLM study Area Industrial Scale Solar Siting

September 1, 2008

I would appreciate it if our public lands were protected from development of any kind.

I anticipate most greatly the setting of "*precedence*" through "NEED" under the guise of "green" energy. Hurrying under pressure from federal and state energy mandates, will make it more difficult or impossible in the future to mitigate applications for development of *any* and *every* kind on our gorgeous public lands. There is valuable "productivity" in the presence of sheer space alone. All environments are home to something unique and critical to the earth's well being. The SLV is an internationally recognized migratory flight path that deserves vigorous protection. Ignoring the entire picture will gloss over *serious predictable consequences* to the environmental/socio-economic of communities affected

Solar development- on a utility scale basis: disrupts the landscape, denies access and develops access where none was, while changing the shade/sun/water cycle so critical to many of the areas being "scoped". Thousands of solar panels precede the problem of removal of *obsolete panels-which are toxic*-and presently non-recyclable.

Solar is most effective *close to its source of consumption*-Utility scale and/or personal panel placement. ALL of Colorado (Western United States) has great solar potential and large tracts of degraded personal, communal right of way and industrial land, vast buildings with roofs- all perfect for local utility scale and distributive solar development.

Utility scale solar energy development is presently tied into transmission line development extending the initial impact zone. Visually disrupted views and auditory space, migratory and native bird threats (we are home to many large raptor species, cranes, geese, owls and other water birds vulnerable to electrocution). Public discussion and input has been rushed, unbalanced, fractured and *token* considering the potential environmental/socio-economic impacts to the valley's lifestyle choices and fragile ecosystems involved.

The *economic benefit to communities* -particularly the individuals whose *property values will plunge*- and those economic and lifestyle ventures dependent on a "non-industrialized ambiance" such as tourism, recreation, and wildlife, have not been thoroughly processed and *solidly mitigated to the benefit of those most closely affected*. Much falls under "eminent domain." *Property devaluation is pervasive*-eventually affecting local tax based services, schools, business and quality of life. One of the reasons that we seem to be under scrutiny for development is our pervasive low land "value" yet-utility solar is *not a provider of a significant amount of long-term local jobs, or stated property tax benefits that will off-set the predictable issues outlined*.

All industry-solar included-require some water-if only to wash panels free of dust (which is plentiful in many of the scoped regions.) Other utility solar scale technologies that provide energy storage-utilize the equivalent water consumption to present agri-business-BUT-utilize it *12 months out of the year-instead of just three*.

Unregulated or legal changes in regulations of water use-make sunny, arid climates very vulnerable to continuing water issues that devastate the local eco-systems. The San Luis Valley is already struggling with this issue. Another "layer" of industrial usage permits would be paradoxical under the guise of "green", potentially drilling into the aquifer *just as the state engineer is denying further drilling permits* for the present agricultural industry. Water is closer to life than energy-this is a SERIOUS potential future issue.

I acknowledge that the energy industry/energy consumer is at a crossroads-under the time limit of legal change in Colorado-to increase "green energy consumption and development by 10%. We are also at high risk to move fast and in the "path of least resistance and cost" *costing our future generations dearly*. We KNOW this-the technology is new-but the pitfalls are predictable.

Let us NOT repeat history-please. Uphold public lands for public enjoyment, open space, environmental sanctity and eco-system balancing. There are *viable alternatives!*...including increased consumer responsibility towards conservation. *Thank-you for your time and attention to this matter.*

Sincerely!
Claire Barker, Mosca, Colorado
 719-378-2024