

## Comment Set C1 – Public Hearing 1-27-15

MR. TURNER: We are recording it. So we appreciate if you use the podium and microphone and the sign in card when you -- I do have cards, two right now, Larry Ronneberg.

MR. LARRY RONNEBERG: I'm one of two owners of Mercey Hot Springs and I have a question just to pose out is why haven't we ever once been contacted in regards to how this project would affect our business? Right on Little Panoche Road. It is a high traffic road for this project and now you are talking about having traffic with trucks of all kinds, all sizes for 24 hours a day for a year and a half. When our guests come out for peace and quiet and all they are going to hear is trucks gearing up, coming up the hill passes and putting on their brakes going down and nobody has ever come talk to us about how that impact can be mitigated. There's also questions about the road. Has anybody -- I brought this up at a Board of Supervisors meeting before. Has anybody ever talked to Fresno County about the impact of what's going to happen to the road coming past us? I doubt it. You know the condition of the road out in the project area. It's terrible. And it rarely gets any attention. Why? Probably because the town is waiting for this project to fix the road. In the

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C1-2

C1-3

C1-4

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meantime the people that are using it have to actually drive off the road to find something that isn't a totally washboard, and you think it's bad now, what do you think it's going to be after 18 months of traffic.

C1-4 cont.

And I actually talked to the Board -- Building Department of Fresno County. To their knowledge, they have never ever been contacted once in regard to this project.

C1-5

Why?

Emergency services. What's going to go on for 18 months of traffic when you know that there is windy roads, there is places where accidents will happen, and where do people come to when they need to use a telephone? They come to us. It disrupts our business. What's going to happen during 18 months of construction? We cannot afford to be an emergency services depot every time somebody has a flat tire. Cell phones don't work, there are no phone lines, our phones are a satellite system which are expensive to run and we can't afford to be impacted by this project in any way or form. And we will probably lose significant business because of the noise. Has anybody come talk to us? No. Why?

C1-6

Hazards. There's hazards all along the road. What's being done about that? It's a skinny, narrow road. Yeah, we see trucks maybe four to six times a day in the busy time when they are either bringing alfalfa in or cattle in and out. Now you are going to have truckloads of steel and heavy equipment

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and solar panels and that road is really, really narrow, especially through the pass. What's going to be done about that?

C1-6 cont.

Public services. How many workers are going to be out there? Are you going to bring in a bunch of port-a-potties? More traffic. Or are they going to be coming to us and ask to use our restrooms. And we are going to say no.

C1-7

The air quality. Now you've got trucks, hundreds of them everyday going up and down the road and the wind blows right across that road, right onto our property, and you are going to have exhaust. What's going to be done about that?

C1-8

So needless to say, we are extremely concerned about the impact to our business to which this project whoever is in charge of it who basically thumbed their nose at us and never have taken the time or decency of making a single phone call to us to say we would like to talk to you so we can work this out.

C1-9

Thank you very much.

MR. TURNER: Thank you for your comment.

The only other speaker card I have is from Chief Sonne Reyna. And if I can ask that you can state your names on the record in case I mess them up.

CHIEF SONNE REYNA: Chief Sonne, S-o-n-n-e, Reyna, R-e-y-n-a, San Juan Indian Council.

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Good evening, relatives. I come here to speak for all the people that are about to be slaughtered on that holy land. The people that my culture calls animals, plants, all the wild critters who have been here before we showed up and probably will not be here too many of them after this -- after this project has gone on the slaughter house over there. I come here to speak for nature that's about to be raped and tortured in that part of the world. And you have to weigh -- you have to weigh the balance, not in your mind but in your heart. Because they are also people. They have children. How would you feel if tomorrow morning somebody comes and says hey, man, we are going to take down your house. Don't worry about it, we'll take real good care of you. Just don't ask us too much about what we are going to do.

So I speak for the people of nature who have no voice. Thank you.

MR. TURNER: Thank you. Those are the two speaker cards I was presented with before the meeting. If anybody else would like to speak, they are free to do so.

MS. KATE WOODS: Good evening. I'm Kate Woods. I live at 20620 New Idria Road, about two miles up the road from where this project is going to be. And I have a few questions. There seems to be -- I hear all kinds of different numbers put out as to exactly how many solar arrays are there going to be at this point, and the project has changed a lot.

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C1-11

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I heard 1.4 million, which I can't even wrap my head around at all. And to that I also want to ask how much cement is going to be used to put these things in. I'd like to echo what my friends and neighbors said, Larry and Chief Sonne about the road is almost undrivable up there. And a lot of traffic is going to just completely disintegrate it. And I'm worried about the soil erosion that this project is going to cause in an already super windy area. Panoche is notorious for it. And what it's likely going to do to the many organic and sustainable ag production that are there in that valley. There are many of them. It is a gem of a valley.

C1-11 cont.

My biggest concern as a wildlife champion is to the flora and fauna that's going to be affected because of this project. I know that they have set aside mitigations for, you know, the last refuge of the San Joaquin Kit Fox, but it certainly is not going to work when -- to stick them in a bearing on the hills, that is not even close to any satellite colony that they need to perpetuate their species. I mean, I think they are down to 99 now, like the Ocelots. And the Blunt Nose Leopard Lizard, that's a last refuge for them. They are now kind of crawling into the griswold but I know they are there. And these guys are indicator species, if they go, we are not far behind.

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So I'm really concerned about all the critters that you can't see readily when you go up there but they are there.

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And there is even a colony of Western Pond Turtles right in the area where they want to put this thing. And I know, because I've spoken to the wildlife biologists who have studied them and tracked them. So those are my concerns right now. I've got a lot more. But I just would like to know some of the answers to those questions.

Thank you.

MS. CHRISTINA CHAVEZ WYATT: Good evening. My name is Christina Chavez Wyatt. I am a San Benito County resident and small business owner here in San Benito County.

Panoche Valley Solar Project enjoys very strong local support from business, community, political and local environmental leaders due to the ability to create broad economic benefits. The project will also support local services and government with county level sales and use taxes. This beneficial economic impact has been a key driver for public opinion poles demonstrating over 71 percent of residents and respondents in support of the project. As association of local business leaders committing to providing a significant contribution to the well-being of San Benito County, the Panoche Valley Solar Project is very much aligned with our current objectives to promote community wellness and physical stability and sustainability, expanding and diversing the community job base, supporting intergovernmental cooperation and encouraging partners and future opportunities

C1-12 cont.

C1-13

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for example when alternative energy projects in the region. Billions of dollars to be spent around California on renewable energy projects and the Panoche Valley Solar Project is only two significant projects in the Monterey Bay region. We are very excited to have a high quality project team to invest in our economically -- county especially in clean renewable solar energy that is not only a high priority of economic but for jobs and the environment. This project has been working cooperatively with State and Federal agencies over the past five years conducting surveys and modifying the scope to design and minimize the impact, especially to wildlife. It's also cited on private land using existing transmission infrastructure, it's also struck an important balance between natural resources and a very well developed project. Additional enhancements includes wildlife corridors, contiguous to 88,000 acres of protected land and 24,000 acres of land permanently set aside for the benefit of sensitive species which is over 110,000 acres of coordinated management area for a single echo system. This conservation land is rich and bio diversity and strongly support larger efforts. We greatly feel the impact of this project is environmentally beneficial now and into the decades into the future. Thank you.

MR. LARRY RONNEBERG: Well, that was a really nice written speech. Only problem is decades in the future. San

C1-13 cont.

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Benito jobs. What kind of jobs are already there. Do you care about them. Do you care about how it's going to impact our business. How come nobody has ever come talk to us? Because we are against the project or you just don't care. Decades to come. Well, my understanding is that those panels are going to come down in a couple decades when they get worn out. So where is the mitigation for that. The end of use project. We use solar in our business and everything we look at is how long will these last. We have batteries. How long will they last. We have solar panels. How long do they last. What do we do for this business to carry on for generations when we are gone. Do you really care? Or are you just looking for a short term fix now because yeah, it turns a bunch of money into the county and yeah, it creates jobs. It's really interesting how in the past couple weeks I have gotten in conversations with people who were actually involved with other solar projects around Fresno County. There's one out near Panoche Road, there is one in Santa Nella. And the horror stories of what I'm hearing from the people on the inside saying man, the dust is unbelievable.

You know what valley fever is? Do you know anything about it? Probably not because you don't have a personal contact most likely with somebody who has had it. I have. And when you have somebody --

MR. TURNER: Sir, if you can address your comments on

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C1-15

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the --

MR. LARRY RONNEBERG: What I think about the environmental document specifically is that somebody wrote that for the people who want to run the project, get the project done, and the 71 percent of the people who are for the project, I bet 70 percent of those 70 percent really don't know anything about the project. What do you think about solar. I think solar is good. We think solar is good. Put it on roofs of buildings like K-Mart's and Walmart's Home Depots, where the roof -- parking structures. But not out in a pristine valley when you can do that project in so many other areas and you have Kit Foxes and other critters, like so many people have talked about, what are you going to do? Ask them to relocate like we did with the Indians and say oh, yeah, you should be really happy there. Don't worry, we'll take care of you. I think we all know that's just BS. I don't care how much land you put aside for them, you are not going to make the critters say okay, I'm going to leave and I'm going to be happy, just because you told me I should be, so we can do this project that is so short term when you really look at the longevity of things. If those critters were happy somewhere else, don't you think they would move there? Don't you think they would go there on their own? No. They found an area that is good for them in the environment that they call it God, call it whatever you want, but they are

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C1-17

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happy where they are at. If they leave on their own, be a different story. But no, we are going to say we are going to cut all this other land where they can go to. Says who? Department of Fish and Game aren't for this project. And what does the company do? Oh, if you don't approve this we are going to sue you. Yeah, we are in a sue happy environment in this whole world, especially California. So here we have a project that could be done in a lot of different places where the ground has already been raped and pillaged, but no, we have an agreement with a few people who are going to make some money off of selling their land and everybody around them is just going to suffer.

So my comments are move the project, don't move the critters. Talk to the people in the area. Find out what they're doing. But the reality is is that nobody really cares what they are doing because all they have with their blinders on is this project that will bring in 300 million dollars. Three million of it will go to China. Is that correct? How much money is going to go to solar panels? They are going to be manufactured, the taxpayers are going to pay the money and it's going to be going to China. Well isn't that wonderful.

Thank you very much.

MR. TURNER: Any other speakers this evening?

Okay. Well thank you for coming. Thank you for being part of the process. And please, send your written

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