

Public Hearing Argument

PUBLIC HEARING STATEMENT (5 MINUTES)

Commissioners, thank you for the chance to speak.

We stand today at a crossroads between Oak City and Delta, in a valley our families have known for generations—a valley shaped by cattle, clean air, open range, and a horizon that still looks the way God made it. Now we are asked to trade that birthright for a zone change of nearly 9,000 acres, not to meet a public need, but to meet a private plan.

Let me be plain. A zone change is not a reward for a company with a big project. It is a legislative act. It must serve the public good, protect the public welfare, and follow the General Plan that this County adopted as its compass. If a change does not advance those aims, it must be denied—no matter the promise of tax dollars or pressure from outside groups.

The applicant wants this land moved from AG-20 to Range and Forest so that a massive, industrial-scale solar field can be placed on ground now used for grazing. But the RF zone was never meant to be a shelter for industrial uses. Its purpose is rangeland, watershed, quiet space, and open space. It is meant to protect the land, not pave it with panels.

A solar installation of this size is not a small shift. It is a sea of steel and glass stretching across nine thousand acres. And unlike a road or a fire station, this impact cannot be paid away. You cannot write a check to restore a skyline. You cannot mitigate a lost view. You cannot buy back a valley once you have allowed it to be covered end to end with industrial hardware.

Our General Plan speaks clearly. It calls for the protection of agricultural lands. It calls for safeguarding rural character. It calls for preserving the very viewsheds this project will erase. Those goals are not suggestions. They are the County's own statement of what is worth keeping.

This zoning request does the opposite of what the Plan asks. It removes grazing lands. It replaces open range with industrial scale development. It changes the heart of the valley forever—and not for the people who live here, but for the benefit of one project serving one private purpose.

We have also heard the claim that this solar field is needed to power the nearby data centers. But the County is not required to reshape nine thousand acres simply because a private company finds it convenient. The data centers were approved without this solar field as a condition. The grid—not your zoning map—is the tool for power supply. Their preference does not create a public duty.

Your own Planning Commission studied this matter at length. They listened to the people, reviewed the code, and voted six to one against the zone change. Their job is to advise you based on planning principles—not politics, not promises. Their recommendation deserves respect.

Commissioners, I know the offer of future tax revenue is tempting. But money cannot be the basis for a land-use decision. Courts have struck down rezonings where fiscal gain was the motivating force. A zone change must rise or fall on planning, on law, and on the long-term public interest.

If you approve this request, you must be able to say—honestly, openly, and on the record—that covering nine thousand acres of SITLA range land with an industrial solar field is consistent with our zoning purpose statements, consistent with our General Plan, and consistent with the public welfare of the citizens you serve.

You cannot say that because it is not true.

This valley is not just empty space waiting for a use. It is part of our story, our economy, our identity. Once we lose it, we lose it for good.

I urge you: honor the General Plan, honor the judgment of your Planning Commission, honor the land and the people who live with its consequences. Deny the zone change. Keep this valley what it has long been—open, honest, and ours.

Thank you.

Dear Millard County Commissioners,

I am writing this letter in opposition to the rezoning of about 9000 acres of land in Millard County to allow a solar farm to be placed there.

The rezoning will hurt agriculture in the County and families that have been long term residents contributing to their support of the County over many years.

The rezoning is not necessary for the data center to be developed as there are other better sources of the electricity necessary to provide power for the plant.

The County may receive some tax benefit from the installation, but much of it will go to SITLA and end up in other counties. Further, we cannot base all our decisions on taxes. The commission has a responsibility to protect the current citizens of the County and not outside interests. The push for solar comes from cities and states outside the County and many from outside the State. Much of the push comes from investors wanting tax benefits. We need to protect current residents against the outside influence and protect our way of life and agriculture.

Solar is viewed as a "green source" of power and necessary to move the country away from a carbon footprint, but this is a false claim and is hurting agriculture throughout the Country. Solar is an intensive user of land with low benefit in power production.

Solar is not green and results in the rape and pillaging of farm and pasture land throughout the US. Solar Panels take a lot of minerals and resources to produce, have a lifespan of only about 15 years, and much of the material used to make them cannot be recycled. Solar is a misuse of resources and ends up destroying the planet not helping it. The County may end up with a huge environmental cleanup at the end of the facilities life. Much of the time solar is not producing power and to produce power throughout the day, battery backups need to be used and those backups take more minerals, many rare earth, destructive mining and again a much worse environmental impact than, gas, coal, nuclear, and hydro.

Another way to back up solar is with backup power from the sources named in the above line. Again this is a misuse of resources as we have to double build power capacity and is not "green" in any sense.

Solar uses huge amounts of land to produce little consistent power. On the page below is information on land use and electric production. As can be seen solar uses by far the most land and generates the least amount of electricity on a consistent basis. I can provide the source of this, but as can be seen some of it comes directly from the DOE.

Further the war on Carbon for "green power" is not correct. The EPA has proposed to end the governments scientific basis for the climate hoax by rescinding the EPA's 2009 illegal and incorrect determination that greenhouse gases endanger the Public Welfare. As part of this effort the DOE issued a report by top climate scientists concluding that US greenhouse gas emissions have no detectable effect on global climate change.

President Trump has stated, "The carbon footprint is a hoax made up by people with evil intentions and they're heading down a path of total destruction." More and more scientists are taking this view. Many point out that CO2 is a beneficial gas whose rising levels have greened the planet. The planet has actually had higher CO2 levels many times in the past and the higher levels have coincided with a greener planet. Yet many misguided individuals and groups continue to push solar and its rape of natural resources.

Most of the supplies necessary to build the facility will be purchased outside the County. Also once constructed it will bring minimal long term jobs to the County. A short term benefit and long term cost are not in the County's interest.

Please turn down the zone change request, protect our environment and the current residents of the County.

Thank you, Greg Greathouse

For a fair apples to apples comparison, let's assume that each type of power plant and solar farm have a rated capacity of 1,000 megawatts (MW) [equivalent to 1 BILLION watts].

Solar PV requires between 5 and 10 acres of land per MW of capacity. So, a 1,000-MW solar PV farm would require 5,000 to 10,000 acres of land. By contrast, nuclear reactors require 0.3-1 acre per MW capacity, natural gas plants require 0.2-0.8 acres per MW, and coal plants require 1-4 acres per MW.

 <https://thundersaidenergy.com/.../is-there-enough-land.../>

Solar PV also has a capacity factor (a measure of just how efficient an energy source is, including factors like weather conditions or downtime for maintenance) of 23.4% as of 2024, according to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). It is worth noting here that solar [by far] has the lowest capacity factor of any electricity generation source.

By comparison, nuclear fission, natural gas (combined cycle) and coal have capacity factors of 92.3%, 59.9% and 42.6%, respectively.

Also IPA's coal power plant had a capacity much higher than the 42.6 % I believe it was above 80%.



Outlook

Creekstone Energy LLC Solar Project Zone Change Application

From Warren Peterson <aeaa@frontiernet.net>

Date Tue 12/2/2025 9:17 AM

To Trevor Johnson <tjohnson@millardcounty.gov>; Bill Wright <BWright@millardcounty.gov>; Vicki Lyman <vlyman@millardcounty.gov>

Cc Marki Rowley <mrowley@millardcounty.gov>; Elise Harris <eharris@millardcounty.gov>

Dear Commissioners:

This message relates to the proposed zone change for 8,938.27 acres from AG-20 to Range & Forest. Though I had planned to attend the Commission meeting today and participate in the Public Hearing, circumstances require that I be elsewhere. Consequently, I am submitting this comment in writing.

Service as the elected Millard County Attorney from 1987 to 1991, and as chair of the School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) Board of Trustees from 2024 through August 2025, and being a long-time resident of Millard County, I have an unusual and perhaps unique perspective on this difficult zone change question before you. In that light, I offer a single question on the proposed zone change ordinance. The question lies in these facts:

- SITLA is statutorily exempt from zoning regulations.
- SITLA is obligated by the Utah Constitution and Utah statutes to act in the best interests of the trust lands beneficiaries.
- There is a wide gap between the revenue on the affected trust lands - if this solar development come to fruition - compared to current grazing fees.
- SITLA is duty bound by law to act in the best interests of the public school beneficiaries in this case, not the interests of the grazers. It really hurts to say this, but it is true.
- SITLA might, and may be required, to disregard Millard County zoning restrictions and grant the lease without a zone change, without a conditional use permit, and without a development agreement.

These facts raise this question:

Are the residents of Millard County better off if the County Commission grants the zone change and enters a development agreement with SITLA and the solar developer to possibly mitigate the impacts of the solar development, or are County residents better off if the County Commission says "no" to the zone change and forces SITLA to exercise its exemption?

Please know that I am not speaking for SITLA or for the intended developer. I am merely trying to frame the question from the viewpoint of a Millard County citizen.

Respectfully submitted,

Warren H. Peterson