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My Turn

Is imprisonment of sun rays in solar panel farms safe?

By Arno E. Cordova

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On Friday (May 10), the Taos County Planning Commission held a public meeting at its chamber to hear, discuss, consider and take action on providing a recommendation to the Taos County Board of Commissioners concerning a request for a special use permit to construct and operate a solar farm (solar panel system) on a 12.8-acre-plus portion of a 160-plus-acre tract of land in front of El Rito community, west of and close to State Road 522 in Cerro. Abeyta Engineering, Inc. is the agent representing Eugene Young, property owner. Syncarpha Questa is the lessee/applicant.

Although it is an awesome project, the aesthetics are contrary to the character and potential development of Northern New Mexico and its appealing scenery: The impact upon the natural ecology would be immeasurable and incompatible. The local community of El Rito disapproves of the solar farm because it will be located at the community's front door, will affect property values and will be a nuisance, hindering the beautiful view of the valley.

Chevron Corp's similar plan above and right west of Questa has set a dangerous precedent to this area by failing to address the potential risk and impact upon the community's health. Syncarpha Questa also appears to have made their decision based on special interest opinion – overlooking the influence of community involvement. Although villages are located apart, they remain one distinct community. The basics of life apply to us all.

Honorable leaders of our community: the purpose of this article is not to condemn, nor to criticize selfishly, but only to offer help. Most of our residents are numb with distrust. Decisions should be based upon simple principles of what is right or wrong, upon what is good or evil, upon what is safe and healthful, and not only about money.

Small doses of radiation from TV, computers, microwave ovens, cellphones and all the many technological inventions in use every day will not injure or kill immediately, but small doses in time will. Cancer is killing many of us. A large majority of senior citizens suffer from cataracts.

Radiation can flow through water, air, rocks and almost everything including our skin then into our cells – and therefore influencing our body's DNA and children who are about to be born. Radiation may be inhibiting intellectual development in children. George Noory of Coast to Coast radio fame reports that his daughter died of brain cancer – attributed to her cellphone. Marie Curie, discoverer of the elements radium

and polonium, died of bone cancer and debilitating cataracts. Steve Schneider and other [local] petitioners warned Kit Carson Electric about the dangers of new smart meters pounding radiation into homes.

It is easy to think that solar panels can do no wrong – after all, they will help lead us out of the energy crisis, right? Unfortunately, the shining beacons of hope produce toxic waste just like cellphones, TVs and computers. A report by California’s Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition admonishes the solar industry “to face up to its e-waste problem head on or risk repeating the mistakes made by the microelectronics industry.”

The toll bell’s song solemnly announces that care be taken in approving solar farms in close proximity to villages, towns and roads where people reside and travel.

Arno Cordova lives in Questa.