

**From:** Sonya Benson <[thecatcommandments@gmail.com](mailto:thecatcommandments@gmail.com)>

**Date:** January 30, 2025 at 11:38:48 AM MST

**To:** Katherine Bruch <[kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov)>, Jordan Juarez <[jojuarez@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:jojuarez@sandovalcountynm.gov)>, Joshua Jones <[jjones@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:jjones@sandovalcountynm.gov)>, "Jon R. Herr" <[jrherr@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:jrherr@sandovalcountynm.gov)>, Michael Meek <[mmeek@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:mmeek@sandovalcountynm.gov)>

**Subject:** Diamond Tail Solar Farm

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Hello Commissioners,

As a resident of Sandoval County, I would like to share the reasons why I strongly urge you to deny Diamond Tail Solar Farm permission to build their proposed solar farm.

My husband and I hand built our home on Puertocito Road. We live 4 3/4 miles down this sleepy, narrow dirt road. Mr. Brandi with PCR, the Argentinian business that would like to build Diamond Tail Solar, has promised me directly on more than one occasion that Puertocito Road would not be used for construction purposes. He seemed to understand that using this dirt road would be unsafe for our community. When I shared with him that our experience with PNM building a substation in 2020-2021 led to residents being driven off of the road by semis, that conditions were created that inhibited residents from walking or riding bicycles, massive amounts of dust coated our lungs and homes for many months, traveling to work or school would have been highly problematic if we weren't in the middle of a pandemic at the time (which, of course, isn't the case now ) and an unsafe environment was created in which fire trucks or ambulances would have been

impaired from reaching us due to heavy semi traffic traveling down the small dirt road that we live nearly 5 miles down from Highway 14, Mr. Brandi agreed that Puertocito Road was a poor choice for construction purposes and promised me that it would only be used for future maintenance purposes concerning the solar farm.

Later that month (November 2024) PCR released the document that I have sent in a following email to the county. As you can see, this document prepares Puertocito Road for heavyweight vehicles, making it more accessible for Diamond Tail Solar Farm's construction phase. Mr. Brandi stated that maintenance of the solar farm would only use a few F-150s. These construction plans are preparing for the much larger semis and vehicles needed for construction purposes.

Commissioners, I am a very large supporter of green energy. My husband and I live off the grid, using photovoltaic panels for our energy needs. We do so because we want to support our environment through our lifestyle choices. I am not opposed to green energy or solar farms. I am opposed to PCR infringing on residents during the years of construction that this farm would take. Traveling to school

and work would be highly problematic for our community. Driving conditions down our road would be unsafe and inappropriate. Quality of life would diminish as our road would no longer be available for walking or riding bikes. Our health would be at risk due to the large, unavoidable amount of dust the semis would create and hinder the arrival of fire trucks or paramedics if needed. I know this all to be true because we experienced heavy semi use during PNM's project. PCR's project is even larger.

Until PCR proves that they do not plan to use Puertocito Road for construction, that they have a plan for water access rather than the aquifer from which our well (our only source of water) draws water, that they have a solid plan for fire (we cannot buy fire insurance due to our home being too far from a fire station . We we are located 1.8 miles from the lithium battery bank as proposed in PCR's map plan) I ask you to deny PCR to move forward with their current plans. I encourage PCR to choose another location in New Mexico. There are so many better places available.

Sincerely ,  
Sonya Benson

**From:** Patricia Kurz <[patriciakurz@kurzfoundation.org](mailto:patriciakurz@kurzfoundation.org)>

**Date:** January 18, 2025 at 10:15:20 AM MST

**To:** and Lisa George <[geolisafranz@aol.com](mailto:geolisafranz@aol.com)>

**Cc:** Katherine Bruch <[kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov)>, Lisa George Franzen <[geolisafranz@aol.com](mailto:geolisafranz@aol.com)>

**Subject:** Re: Question about the Diamond Tail Solar Project

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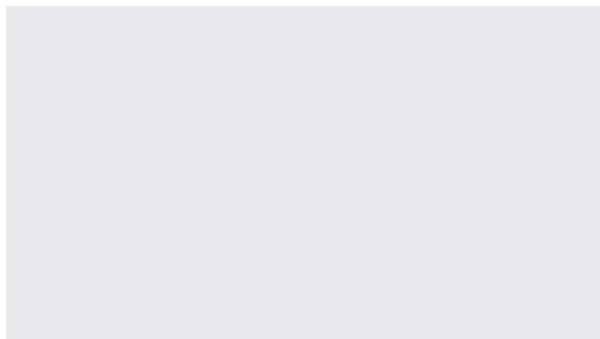
Thank you George,

We didn't know anything about this project until a friend living very close to the area pointed it out to us. Now I do have more information that I can share with you.

"Patricia, Please note our areas share the same district commissioner and the community just south of the proposed solar plant, San Pedro Creek, is part of ES-CA's member group. We are first and foremost informing your area as this project as it could affect Placitas by contaminating the aquifer that feed your water supply and put your area at a much higher fire risk. The support we might ask for would only be to write letters to Commissioner Bruch opposing the location of the solar plant on our National Scenic Byway, which only take minutes. Please also know our groups wrote in large numbers to BLM in support of withdrawing Buffalo Tract from mineral development. Again, thank you any help!"

These are articles in the Santa Fe New Mexican yesterday and today, clearly showing that there are many against and some in favor. Now that I have done more research I found more information and I am inclined to join those against. Not about not having the project, but in favor of having it far away, there is a lot of uninhabited land in the state where this plant could exist.

Below is a full link to the project, even available on the Sandoval County website, which suggests Sandoval County is in favor of this project selling all the advantages, but not mentioning the risks.



So this is part of what we have learned and we wanted to know is ESCA was aware of this and what its position would be. We know ESCA cares very much about our area and it's homeowners and it has proved it, therefore your opinion on the matter is very important to us. Are we at risk or not? Is it fair to ruin the Turquoise Trail and affect property owners in there? We would gladly hear your thoughts.

Thank you and have a good weekend,

Rob and Patricia

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 18, 2025, at 7:53 AM, George and Lisa <[geolisafranz@aol.com](mailto:geolisafranz@aol.com)> wrote:

Patricia, ESCA has not put the issue on our radar. I have talked to our county commissioner on the subject. She told me that the entrance to the area will be from highway14 and not through Placitas. I have not looked into the project any further.

What have you heard and do you have a contact or name of the company putting in the solar?

George

On Friday, January 17, 2025 at 08:39:45 AM MST, Patricia Kurz <[patriciakurz@kurzfoundation.org](mailto:patriciakurz@kurzfoundation.org)> wrote:

Good morning George,

Thank you for the very professional website with updated information of interest.

You must be busy, but I wonder if you had a chance to read my previous email, inquiring about the Diamond Tail Solar Project possibly affecting Placitas and asking if ESCA has any information about it?

We would appreciate your kind response.

Very kindly,

Rob and Patricia Kurz  
17 Yucca Lane  
Placitas

Sent from my iPhone

> On Jan 11, 2025, at 11:09 AM, Patricia Kurz <[patriciakurz@kurzfoundation.org](mailto:patriciakurz@kurzfoundation.org)> wrote:

>

> Greetings George,

>

> We hope you had a good holiday season and we send our best wishes for 2025.

>  
> We wonder if ESCA has any information about the Diamond Tail Solar Project in Sandoval County.  
>  
> A friend of ours wrote to us with information about this project possibly affecting Placitas?  
>  
> We would appreciate any comments or opinion on the matter.  
>  
> Very kindly,  
>  
> Rob and Patricia Kurz  
> ESCA members and Placitas residents  
>  
> Sent from my iPhone

## PASA DAY

- ◆ Bluebird Cafe songwriters in town
- ◆ I'd Knit That at Kouri + Corrao
- ◆ Not-to-be-missed exhibits
- ◆ Chefs share winter-warmup recipes

INSIDE THIS WEEK'S PASATIEMPO



St. Michael's boys b  
extends win streak

SPORTS

Santa Fe seeking \$  
for Richards Aven

LOCAL & REGI

MAGNA EST VERITAS ET PRAEVALEBIT

# SANTA FE NEW MEXICO

Locally owned and independent Friday, January 17, 2025 [santafenewmexican.com](http://santafenewmexican.com) \$1.50



## Targeting online bullying, hazing

AG's bills would crack down  
after high-profile cases;  
critics say criminal charges  
aren't going to help kids

By Esteban Candelaria  
[ecandelaria@sfnewmexican.com](mailto:ecandelaria@sfnewmexican.com)

ALBUQUERQUE — Attorney General Raúl Torrez aims to add another tool for prosecutors tackling cyberbullying and hazing, which he said have increasingly harmed New Mexico's young people.

Noting the rapid evolution of technology and a rise in high-profile incidents at schools and universities across the state, Torrez announced during a news conference Thursday he is backing two bills in the upcoming legislative session that would make such acts criminal offenses.

"We have had significant issues with student safety, in particular with instances of hazing and cyberbullying at both higher education institutions in our state and in K-12 schools," he said. "It's far past time for New Mexico to

*Please see story on Page A-4*

### INSIDE

◆ Columnist Simonich: The best evidence of who's onto something important and who's not can be found in proposals already filed. **PAGE A-7**

## New solar project facing

Rural Sandoval County site near Santa Fe County border  
draws heavy opposition similar to Ranch Viejo proposal

By Cormac Dodd  
[cdodd@sfnewmexican.com](mailto:cdodd@sfnewmexican.com)

On the other side of the Turquoise Trail from Eldorado, another solar project is drawing heated opposition. Residents of eastern Sandoval

County have packed meeting rooms in recent months to assail a sprawling solar and battery storage development proposed for an area east of Placitas by a company headquartered in Argentina. In many ways, the dynamic is similar to what is playing out in Santa Fe County

with the Rancho Viejo Solar proposal: organized and fervent opposition to a large clean energy development, as boosters of the projects stress the need to slow the worsening impacts of climate change while neighbors worry about fire risk and other possible impacts to their homes.

The Diamond Tail solar and storage project would generate 220 megawatts

## Emergency shelter braces for





He said at the news conference he would bet New Mexicans would line up in support of more accountability for young people, adding those who raise concerns about criminalizing the

Sergeant shared the guardian of the victim has expressed to the investigator they will not respond to follow up questions on the investigation, nor inquiries from JPO or the District

places journalists into local newsrooms. He covers child welfare and the state Children, Youth and Families Department. Learn more about Report for America at [reportforamerica.org](http://reportforamerica.org).



Doniel McQueen, reporter, local

## New solar project facing heat

*Continued from Page A-1*

presentation for the project indicates. As a result, it has stirred some discussion in Santa Fe County.

What the simultaneity of these twin land-use matters underscores is that, while many in blue-leaning New Mexico support the need for more green energy generation, such projects often face challenges as public utilities seek to meet clean energy targets set by the state.

Facing off against Diamond Tail, the East Mountains Protection Action Coalition has made its presence known. It's no different in Santa Fe County, where groups like the Clean Energy Coalition of Santa Fe County have sought to defeat the Rancho Viejo project.

"I see that both communities are very concerned about fire protection associated with incredibly large industrial lithium battery storage facilities," said Dennis Kellogg, a spokesperson for the East Mountains coalition.

The projects have support as well, with some expressing dismay about the the pushback the proposals have received.

"If you look across the country actually, there are a number of projects being opposed at any given time, and it all seems to level the same misinformation, and if you know anything about the technology, it's really quite blatant that it is misinformation," said Daniel Baker, a Santa Fe County resident who said he has professional experience working for solar companies.

The projects have drawn the attention of state lawmakers. Rep. Matthew

McQueen, D-Galisteo, who heads the House Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Committee, said he is considering a bill that would add an additional layer of government oversight for large-scale solar and battery storage projects.

"We've asked for a bill to be drafted that would direct the [Public Regulation Commission] to prepare rules dealing with appropriate siting of battery installation, solar installation and transmission lines," McQueen said.

McQueen said that under the bill, large-scale solar and battery storage developments would still require approval from local governments but it would also give the Public Regulation Commission, which is responsible for regulating public utilities, oversight over the projects based on certain regulations that would have to be created.

"I'm not divesting local authority of that control but I'm adding another layer of review," McQueen said.

### Diamond Tail solar

The project, proposed by PCR Investments, would generate a power output that would be more than the entire annual residential load of Sandoval County and Santa Fe County, according to an October presentation from the company.

That would make the project larger than the Rancho Viejo Solar proposal, which would be capable of powering Santa Fe's residential load, according to officials with AES Corp., the Virginia-based energy giant behind the project near Eldorado.



Both projects are in areas strategically located near PNM substations, with the Diamond Tail site about 6 miles southeast of the existing Diamond Tail Substation PNM owns.

After a contentious meeting, the Sandoval County Planning and Zoning Commission in December recommended county commissioners give the project, which requires a zoning change to move forward, the green light. A date has not been set for that hearing according to county Planning and Zoning Director Daniel Beaman.

The East Mountains Protection Action Coalition claims the potential impacts and challenges include fire risks, the use of an "already dwindling" water supply, environmental impacts such as pollution from chemicals in solar panels and batteries and visual impacts which could decrease property





## NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

# Battery plant fire forces evacuation

The Associated Press

MOSS LANDING, Calif. — A major fire burning Friday at one of the world's largest battery storage plants in Northern California is sending up flames and towering plumes of toxic smoke, leading to the evacuation of 1,700 people and the closure of a major highway.

The blaze in Moss Landing started Thursday. By Friday morning, however, the flames and smoke had significantly diminished in size, said Chief Joel Mendoza of the North County Fire Protection District of Monterey County.

"There's very little, if any, of a plume emitting from that building," Mendoza said. Crews were not engaging with the fire and were waiting for it to burn out, he added.

The fire has raised concerns in Santa Fe County, where a proposed solar power and battery storage facility has faced fierce opposition over fears such an incident could ignite a wildfire.

Although, Thursday's blaze did not go beyond the facility, according to Monterey County spokesperson Nicholas Pasculli.

Camilla Brom, who lives in Rancho San Marcos south of Santa Fe, is among the area residents who watched the Moss Landing fire and evacuation unfold with a particular concern. Her home is near where energy giant AES Corp. is proposing to construct a sprawling facility known as Rancho Viejo Solar.

"This is more evidence or proof how dangerous this type of a facility is," Brom said. "With this fire that's happening now, I don't know what it's going to take if this doesn't wake people up."

The AES project aims to generate 96 megawatts of power and roughly 45 megawatts of battery storage at a site about two miles east of N.M. 14 and 1.3 miles from Eldorado. An even larger development, dubbed Diamond Tail, is being proposed in Sandoval County near the Santa Fe County line. It would be capable of producing 220 megawatts of power from solar and 110 megawatts of battery storage.

"This isn't just another development," said Brom, who is one of the people organizing opposition to the Rancho Viejo Solar proposal. "This is a very dangerous facility that should be anywhere near people. It should be out in an industrial area."



SHMUEL THA

**Flames from a fire fill the sky Thursday at the Moss Landing Power Plant, Calif. The fire has raised concerns in Santa Fe County, where a proposed solar power and battery storage facility has faced fierce opposition over**

could play a role in the state's efforts to slow climate change and would be an economic win for the region. They also maintain the industry has made strides in recent years to reduce the fire risk at battery facilities.

Daniel Baker, a Santa Fe County resident who said he has professional experience working for solar companies, said he has not had time to research the fire at the Vistra Energy lithium battery plant in Moss Landing.

But he said he would "want to know when facility was installed before comparing it to a modern facility like Rancho Viejo, or Diamond Tail."

"The reason is that in 2022 the safety standards were revised and improved significantly," Baker wrote in a text message.

Located about 77 miles south of San Francisco, the Moss Landing plant is owned by Texas-based company Vistra Energy and contains tens of thousands of lithium batteries.

"There's no way to sugar coat it. This is a disaster, is what it is," Monterey County Supervisor Glenn Church told KSBW-TV, speaking of the fire. But he said he did not expect the blaze to spread beyond the concrete building it was enclosed in.

Residents expressed concerns about

emergency meeting of the Board of Supervisors on Friday.

"It doesn't appear that they had the appropriate fire response to minimize this fire and have to let it burn, exposing all of us," Silvia Morales said.

Fires ignited at the Vista Energy plant in 2022 due to a fire sprinkler system that resulted in some damage, according to *The Mercury News*.

It was unclear what caused the fire, Vistra said in a statement. "Once detected, everyone at the plant was safely evacuated. After the fire is out, the investigation will begin."

"Our top priority is the safety of the community and our personnel. We appreciate the continued support of our local emergency responders," a spokesperson for Vistra, said.

Timothy Fox, managing director at View Energy Partners, a nuclear energy research firm, said, "We are concerned that this incident could mark the beginning of a national trend of growing opposition to battery storage deployment."

Cormac Dodd of The New York Times





**Diamond Tail  
Solar and Storage Project**



**From:** Mark Benson <[markdbenson77@gmail.com](mailto:markdbenson77@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** January 31, 2025 at 7:00:07 PM MST  
**To:** Katherine Bruch <[kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov)>  
**Subject:** Fwd:  
**Reply-To:** [Markdbenson77@gmail.com](mailto:Markdbenson77@gmail.com)

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----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Mark Benson <[markdbenson77@gmail.com](mailto:markdbenson77@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** Friday, January 31, 2025  
**Subject:**  
**To:** [kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov)  
**Cc:** [Jrherr@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:Jrherr@sandovalcountynm.gov), [Mmeek@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:Mmeek@sandovalcountynm.gov), [Jjones@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:Jjones@sandovalcountynm.gov)

Dear sirs and madam, my name is Mark Benson and I am a resident of Puertocito road. I wanted to voice my concerns over the proposed solar farm and battery storage near our home. Questions have been continually raised as to where water for the construction process of this proposal will come from. They have not been answered. Questions about adequate fire safety have been raised. They have not been answered. It takes the fire department 45-60 minutes to get to our house and we are 15 minutes closer to the fire department. We all live in an area (the southwest) where these are the 2 biggest concerns of our welfare. Until these issues are satisfactorily answered I beg of you to oppose taking further action on behalf of this site as a viable location.

**From:** Sharon Sharp <[sharonwsharp@everyactioncustom.com](mailto:sharonwsharp@everyactioncustom.com)>

**Date:** February 1, 2025 at 6:08:02 PM MST

**To:** Katherine Bruch <[kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov)>

**Subject:** New Mexicans Support Diamond Tail Solar

**Reply-To:** [sharonwsharp@gmail.com](mailto:sharonwsharp@gmail.com)

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Dear Commissioner Katherine A. Bruch,

As a member of the community who values our rural character and economic resilience, I'm writing to express my support for the Diamond Tail Solar Project in Sandoval County. This project represents a unique opportunity to bring significant benefits to our area—good-paying construction jobs, stable income for landowners, and critical tax revenue to fund schools and first responders—while respecting the quiet, open spaces that make our county special.

Solar farms are a practical and low-impact use of rural land, ensuring it remains productive without the demands of high-density development. With advanced technology, including energy storage systems, these projects enhance grid reliability and support a stable energy supply for our region while simultaneously supporting New Mexico's renewable energy goals. Importantly, they align with broader efforts to diversify our energy resources and keep energy costs low, which is beneficial for families and businesses alike.

Supporting the Diamond Tail Solar Project is a common-sense step that strengthens our local economy while preserving the values we hold dear. Thank you for your service to our community and for considering this important project.

Sincerely,

Sharon Sharp

Albuquerque, NM 87111-1527

[sharonwsharp@gmail.com](mailto:sharonwsharp@gmail.com)



**From:** Katherine Gnauck <[kgnauck@everyactioncustom.com](mailto:kgnauck@everyactioncustom.com)>

**Date:** February 1, 2025 at 6:40:02 PM MST

**To:** Katherine Bruch <[kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov)>

**Subject:** New Mexicans Support Diamond Tail Solar

**Reply-To:** [kgnauck@salud.unm.edu](mailto:kgnauck@salud.unm.edu)

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Sincerely,

Katherine Gnauck

Albuquerque, NM 87123-2412

[kgnauck@salud.unm.edu](mailto:kgnauck@salud.unm.edu)

**From:** Veronica Fuller <[spout.encore\\_2a@everyactioncustom.com](mailto:spout.encore_2a@everyactioncustom.com)>

**Date:** February 1, 2025 at 6:47:32 PM MST

**To:** Katherine Bruch <[kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov)>

**Subject:** New Mexicans Support Diamond Tail Solar

**Reply-To:** [spout.encore\\_2a@icloud.com](mailto:spout.encore_2a@icloud.com)

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Sincerely,

Veronica Fuller

Rio Rancho, NM 87124-5631

[spout.encore\\_2a@icloud.com](mailto:spout.encore_2a@icloud.com)

**From:** Patrice Goodkind <[pgoodkind@everyactioncustom.com](mailto:pgoodkind@everyactioncustom.com)>

**Date:** February 1, 2025 at 11:11:21 PM MST

**To:** Katherine Bruch <[kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov)>

**Subject:** New Mexicans Support Diamond Tail Solar

**Reply-To:** [pgoodkind@gmail.com](mailto:pgoodkind@gmail.com)

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Sincerely,

Patrice Goodkind

Albuquerque, NM 87111-3703

[pgoodkind@gmail.com](mailto:pgoodkind@gmail.com)



**From:** Joel Richards <[joel352000@everyactioncustom.com](mailto:joel352000@everyactioncustom.com)>

**Date:** February 2, 2025 at 7:20:54 AM MST

**To:** Katherine Bruch <[kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov)>

**Subject:** New Mexicans Support Diamond Tail Solar

**Reply-To:** [joel352000@yahoo.com](mailto:joel352000@yahoo.com)

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Sincerely,

Joel Richards

Albuquerque, NM 87123-1803

[joel352000@yahoo.com](mailto:joel352000@yahoo.com)

**From:** Holly Truitt <[hcrevtruitt@everyactioncustom.com](mailto:hcrevtruitt@everyactioncustom.com)>

**Date:** February 2, 2025 at 3:03:45 PM MST

**To:** Katherine Bruch <[kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov)>

**Subject:** New Mexicans Support Diamond Tail Solar

**Reply-To:** [hcrevtruitt@gmail.com](mailto:hcrevtruitt@gmail.com)

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Sincerely,

Holly Truitt

Albuquerque, NM 87106-1604

[hcrevtruitt@gmail.com](mailto:hcrevtruitt@gmail.com)

**From:** Betsey Larson <[betsey3146@everyactioncustom.com](mailto:betsey3146@everyactioncustom.com)>

**Date:** February 3, 2025 at 6:57:32 AM MST

**To:** Katherine Bruch <[kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov)>

**Subject:** New Mexicans Support Diamond Tail Solar

**Reply-To:** [betsey3146@gmail.com](mailto:betsey3146@gmail.com)

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Dear Commissioner Katherine A. Bruch,

As a member of the community who values our rural character and economic resilience, I'm writing to express my support for the Diamond Tail Solar Project in Sandoval County. This project represents a unique opportunity to bring significant benefits to our area—good-paying construction jobs, stable income for landowners, and critical tax revenue to fund schools and first responders—while respecting the quiet, open spaces that make our county special.

Solar farms are a practical and low-impact use of rural land, ensuring it remains productive without the demands of high-density development. With advanced technology, including energy storage systems, these projects enhance grid reliability and support a stable energy supply for our region while simultaneously supporting New Mexico's renewable energy goals. Importantly, they align with broader efforts to diversify our energy resources and keep energy costs low, which is beneficial for families and businesses alike.

Supporting the Diamond Tail Solar Project is a common-sense step that strengthens our local economy while preserving the values we hold dear. Thank you for your service to our community and for considering this important project.

Sincerely,

Betsey Larson

Rio Rancho, NM 87124-1194

[betsey3146@gmail.com](mailto:betsey3146@gmail.com)



**From:** Danny McClung <[dmcclung57@everyactioncustom.com](mailto:dmcclung57@everyactioncustom.com)>

**Date:** February 3, 2025 at 2:07:12 PM MST

**To:** Katherine Bruch <[kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov)>

**Subject:** New Mexicans Support Diamond Tail Solar

**Reply-To:** [dmcclung57@hotmail.com](mailto:dmcclung57@hotmail.com)

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Dear Commissioner Katherine A. Bruch,

As a PNM ratepayer and member of the community who values our rural character and economic resilience, I'm writing to express my support for the Diamond Tail Solar Project in Sandoval County. This project represents a unique opportunity to bring significant benefits to our area—good-paying construction jobs, stable income for landowners, and critical tax revenue to fund schools and first responders—while respecting the quiet, open spaces that make our county special.

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Supporting the Diamond Tail Solar Project is a common-sense step that strengthens our local economy while preserving the values we hold dear. Thank you for your service to our community and for considering this important project.

Sincerely, Danny McClung

Sincerely,  
Danny McClung  
Albuquerque, NM 87108-1103  
[dmcclung57@hotmail.com](mailto:dmcclung57@hotmail.com)

**From:** Teresa DeBacker <[profdebacker@everyactioncustom.com](mailto:profdebacker@everyactioncustom.com)>

**Date:** February 3, 2025 at 2:08:44 PM MST

**To:** Katherine Bruch <[kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov)>

**Subject:** New Mexicans Support Diamond Tail Solar

**Reply-To:** [profdebacker@gmail.com](mailto:profdebacker@gmail.com)

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Dear Commissioner Katherine A. Bruch,

As a PNM ratepayer and member of the community who values our rural character and economic resilience, I'm writing to express my support for the Diamond Tail Solar Project in Sandoval County. This project represents a unique opportunity to bring significant benefits to our area—good-paying construction jobs, stable income for landowners, and critical tax revenue to fund schools and first responders—while respecting the quiet, open spaces that make our county special.

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Sincerely, Teresa DeBacker

Sincerely,  
Teresa DeBacker  
Albuquerque, NM 87108-1103  
[profdebacker@gmail.com](mailto:profdebacker@gmail.com)

## Cynthia Saiz

---

**From:** Katherine Bruch  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 8:07 AM  
**To:** Wayne Johnson; Daniel Beaman  
**Subject:** Fwd: New Mexicans Support Diamond Tail Solar

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Siobhan Hammack <sioham7@everyactioncustom.com>  
**Date:** January 30, 2025 at 6:45:31 AM MST  
**To:** aKatherine Bruch <kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov>  
**Subject:** New Mexicans Support Diamond Tail Solar  
**Reply-To:** sioham7@gmail.com

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Dear Commissioner Katherine A. Bruch,

As a member of the community who values our rural character and economic resilience, I'm writing to express my support for the Diamond Tail Solar Project in Sandoval County. This project represents a unique opportunity to bring significant benefits to our area—good-paying construction jobs, stable income for landowners, and critical tax revenue to fund schools and first responders—while respecting the quiet, open spaces that make our county special.

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Supporting the Diamond Tail Solar Project is a common-sense step that strengthens our local economy while preserving the values we hold dear. Thank you for your service to our community and for considering this important project.

Sincerely,  
Siobhan Hammack  
Bernalillo, NM 87004-6535  
sioham7@gmail.com

**From:** Jennifer Martin <[jenniferjeanmartin@gmail.com](mailto:jenniferjeanmartin@gmail.com)>

**Date:** January 31, 2025 at 11:40:16 AM MST

**To:** Katherine Bruch <[kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov)>, "Jon R. Herr" <[jrherr@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:jrherr@sandovalcountynm.gov)>, Jordan Juarez <[jojuarez@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:jojuarez@sandovalcountynm.gov)>, Michael Meek <[mmeek@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:mmeek@sandovalcountynm.gov)>, Joshua Jones <[jjones@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:jjones@sandovalcountynm.gov)>

**Subject:** PCR Energy's proposed Diamond Tail Solar Plant

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Dear Sandoval Board of County Commissioners,

Many of our residents here in Galisteo are also concerned about this project. We hope you can find a more suitable location for this.

I am writing in opposition to PCR Energy's proposed Diamond Tail Solar Plant to be located at the center point of the Turquoise Trail National Scenic Byway. The visual disruption caused by this proposed 2.8-square-mile solar facility, particularly its visibility from elevated points along the Turquoise Trail, threatens to spoil views, deter tourism, and diminish property values, while endangering critical economic and cultural benefits for New Mexico. I urge the commission to recommend relocating this project to a more suitable site away from the byway's viewshed. New Mexico offers vast stretches of land ideal for solar development that do not compromise its scenic or cultural treasures. Such a relocation would balance the need for renewable energy with the equally critical need to protect landscapes that hold significant cultural, ecological, and economic value.

Our opposition to PCR Energy's Diamond Tail Solar Plant boils down to these 2 specific concerns:

- Threat of fire and water contamination:

This proposed power plant endangers the safety and wellbeing, of the surrounding citizens, their properties, and residential wells. PCR's proposed battery energy storage system is generically prone to fire caused by lithium storage batteries and their specific design has inadequate security safeguards against battery failing to meet industry "best practices" for safety and security. These same batteries can leach forever chemicals contaminating our aquifers, residential wells and the Albuquerque Basin providing water to the entire city. The location of the proposed power plant is inappropriate, because the site is too remote, with first responders too far away to effectively intervene in the event of fire, which is a real threat as this site is already subject to recurring natural wildfires.

- Wrong Location:

The size and scale of this proposed power plant would obviously detract from the scenic beauty of Turquoise Trail, being in full view of Sandia Crest Overlook, being in close proximity to and in full view of the Albuquerque Golden Open Space; being in close proximity to and in full view of the Turquoise Trail National Scenic Byway; and being situated on a location at which several Hollywood movies have been filmed due to its enchanting natural beauty as well as thousands of works of art done by notable artist such as Georgia O'Keeffe.

There are other locations in Sandoval County, and in New Mexico, that are far more appropriate for a power plant and battery energy storage system of this type and scale, specifically so-called "brownfields", in which the land has already been disturbed, is not subject to wildfire, and is situated closer to first responders. I ask you to vote "no" to this zoning change ensure that New Mexico remains a leader in scenic preservation. I ask the commission to relocate this project ensuring a balanced approach to development that respects and integrates the beauty of the landscape with renewable energy.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Martin  
President, Galisteo Community Association  
9B Marcellina Lane  
Galisteo, NM 87540  
[jenniferjeanmartin@gmail.com](mailto:jenniferjeanmartin@gmail.com)



**From:** Michael Madden <[mikemadden52@gmail.com](mailto:mikemadden52@gmail.com)>

**Date:** January 31, 2025 at 4:32:22 PM MST

**To:** Katherine Bruch <[kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov)>, "Jon R. Herr" <[jrherr@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:jrherr@sandovalcountynm.gov)>, Michael Meek <[mmeek@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:mmeek@sandovalcountynm.gov)>, Jordan Juarez <[jojuarez@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:jojuarez@sandovalcountynm.gov)>, Joshua Jones <[jjones@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:jjones@sandovalcountynm.gov)>

**Cc:** Wayne Johnson <[wjohnson@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:wjohnson@sandovalcountynm.gov)>

**Subject:** Madden- Letter of Opposition to Diamond Tail Solar Plant

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MADDEN -  
Opposition Letter tc

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Sandoval County Commissioners,

Attached is my Letter of Opposition to the proposed Diamond Tail Solar Plant on the Turquoise Trail National Scenic Byway.

Mike Madden  
District 1 Sandoval County resident

**From:** Angelynn Gomez <[gomez.la626@everyactioncustom.com](mailto:gomez.la626@everyactioncustom.com)>

**Date:** February 1, 2025 at 5:15:21 PM MST

**To:** Katherine Bruch <[kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov)>

**Subject:** New Mexicans Support Diamond Tail Solar

**Reply-To:** [gomez.la626@gmail.com](mailto:gomez.la626@gmail.com)

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Dear Commissioner Katherine A. Bruch,

Dear leader:

As a member of the community who values our rural character and economic resilience, I'm writing to express my support for the Diamond Tail Solar Project in Sandoval County. This project represents a unique opportunity to bring significant benefits to our area—good-paying construction jobs, stable income for landowners, and critical tax revenue to fund schools and first responders—while respecting the quiet, open spaces that make our county special.

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Supporting the Diamond Tail Solar Project is a common-sense step that strengthens our local economy while preserving the values we hold dear. Thank you for your service to our community and for considering this important project.

Sincerely,

Angelynn Gomez

Wife, mother concerned citizen

Sincerely,

Angelynn Gomez

Rio Rancho, NM 87124-3080

[gomez.la626@gmail.com](mailto:gomez.la626@gmail.com)

**From:** Melody Wells <[go.melody.wells@everyactioncustom.com](mailto:go.melody.wells@everyactioncustom.com)>

**Date:** February 1, 2025 at 5:24:50 PM MST

**To:** Katherine Bruch <[kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov)>

**Subject:** New Mexicans Support Diamond Tail Solar

**Reply-To:** [go.melody.wells@gmail.com](mailto:go.melody.wells@gmail.com)

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Dear Commissioner Katherine A. Bruch,

As a member of the community who values our rural character and economic resilience, I'm writing to express my support for the Diamond Tail Solar Project in Sandoval County. This project represents a unique opportunity to bring significant benefits to our area—good-paying construction jobs, stable income for landowners, and critical tax revenue to fund schools and first responders—while respecting the quiet, open spaces that make our county special.

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Sincerely,

Melody Wells

Albuquerque, NM 87106-2947

[go.melody.wells@gmail.com](mailto:go.melody.wells@gmail.com)

**From:** Heather Karlson <[sma50@everyactioncustom.com](mailto:sma50@everyactioncustom.com)>

**Date:** February 1, 2025 at 4:51:58 PM MST

**To:** Katherine Bruch <[kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov)>

**Subject:** Please Support Diamond Tail Solar

**Reply-To:** [sma50@hotmail.com](mailto:sma50@hotmail.com)

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Dear Commissioner Katherine A. Bruch,

I'm writing to express my support for the Diamond Tail Solar Project in Sandoval County. It is well past time that we get our electricity from solar and wind instead of fossil fuels.

Thank you for considering this important project.

Sincerely,

Heather Karlson

Santa Fe, NM 87504-8371

[sma50@hotmail.com](mailto:sma50@hotmail.com)

**From:** Patricia Kurz <[patriciakurz@kurzfoundation.org](mailto:patriciakurz@kurzfoundation.org)>  
**Date:** January 18, 2025 at 10:15:20 AM MST  
**To:** and Lisa George <[geolisafranzen@aol.com](mailto:geolisafranzen@aol.com)>  
**Cc:** Katherine Bruch <[kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov)>, Lisa George Franzen <[geolisafranzen@aol.com](mailto:geolisafranzen@aol.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: Question about the Diamond Tail Solar Project

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Thank you George,

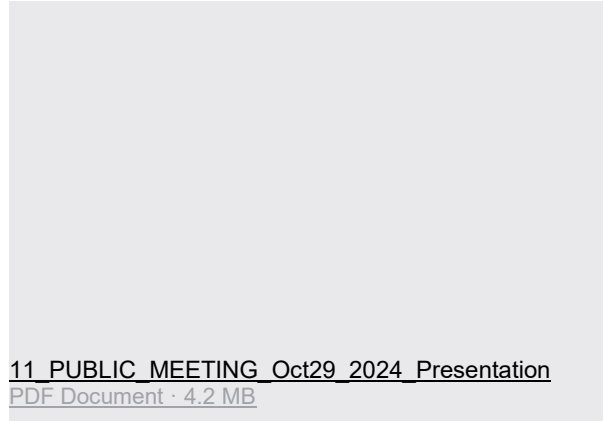
We didn't know anything about this project until a friend living very close to the area pointed it out to us. Now I do have more information that I can share with you.

"Patricia, Please note our areas share the same district commissioner and the community just south of the proposed solar plant, San Pedro Creek, is part of ES-CA's member group. We are first and foremost informing your area as this project as it could affect Placitas by contaminating the aquifer that feed your water supply and put your area at a much higher fire risk. The support we might ask for would only be to write letters to Commissioner Bruch opposing the location of the solar plant on our National Scenic Byway, which only take minutes. Please also know our groups wrote in large numbers to BLM in support of withdrawing Buffalo Tract from mineral development. Again, thank you any help!"

These are articles in the Santa Fe New Mexican yesterday and today, clearly showing that there are many against and some in favor. Now that I have done more research I found more information and I am inclined to join those against. Not about not having the project, but in favor of having it far away, there is a lot of uninhabited land in the state where this plant could exist.



Below is a full link to the project, even available on the Sandoval County website, which suggests Sandoval County is in favor of this project selling all the advantages, but not mentioning the risks.



11\_PUBLIC\_MEETING\_Oct29\_2024\_Presentation  
PDF Document · 4.2 MB

So this is part of what we have learned and we wanted to know is ESCA was aware of this and what its position would be. We know ESCA cares very much about our area and it's homeowners and it has proved it, therefore your opinion on the matter is very important to us. Are we at risk or not? Is it fair to ruin the Turquoise Trail and affect property owners in there? We would gladly hear your thoughts.

Thank you and have a good weekend,

Rob and Patricia

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 18, 2025, at 7:53 AM, George and Lisa <[geolisafransen@aol.com](mailto:geolisafransen@aol.com)> wrote:

Patricia, ESCA has not put the issue on our radar. I have talked to our county commissioner on the subject. She told me that the entrance to the area will be from highway14 and not through Placitas. I have not looked into the project any further.

What have you heard and do you have a contact or name of the company putting in the solar?

George

On Friday, January 17, 2025 at 08:39:45 AM MST, Patricia Kurz <[patriciakurz@kurzfoundation.org](mailto:patriciakurz@kurzfoundation.org)> wrote:

Good morning George,

Thank you for the very professional website with updated information of interest.

You must be busy, but I wonder if you had a chance to read my previous email, inquiring about the Diamond Tail Solar Project possibly affecting Placitas and asking if ESCA has any information about it?

We would appreciate your kind response.

Very kindly,

Rob and Patricia Kurz  
17 Yucca Lane  
Placitas

Sent from my iPhone

> On Jan 11, 2025, at 11:09 AM, Patricia Kurz <[patriciakurz@kurzfoundation.org](mailto:patriciakurz@kurzfoundation.org)> wrote:

>

> Greetings George,

>

> We hope you had a good holiday season and we send our best wishes for 2025.

>

> We wonder if ESCA has any information about the Diamond Tail Solar Project in Sandoval County.

>

> A friend of ours wrote to us with information about this project possibly affecting Placitas?

>

> We would appreciate any comments or opinion on the matter.

>

> Very kindly,

>

> Rob and Patricia Kurz

> ESCA members and Placitas residents

>

> Sent from my iPhone

## PASA DAY

- ◆ Bluebird Cafe songwriters in town
- ◆ I'd Knit That at Kouri + Corrao
- ◆ Not-to-be-missed exhibits
- ◆ Chefs share winter-warmup recipes

INSIDE THIS WEEK'S PASATIEMPO



St. Michael's boys basketball team extends win streak to five games

SPORTS, B-1

Santa Fe seeking \$2.5M from state for Richards Avenue extension

LOCAL & REGION, A-7

MAGNA EST VERITAS ET PRAEVALEBIT

# SANTA FE NEW MEXICAN

Locally owned and independent Friday, January 17, 2025 [santafenewmexican.com](http://santafenewmexican.com) \$1.50

 **LEGISLATURE**  
THE 2025 SESSION

## Targeting online bullying, hazing

AG's bills would crack down after high-profile cases; critics say criminal charges aren't going to help kids

By Esteban Candelaria  
[ecandelaria@sfnwmexican.com](mailto:ecandelaria@sfnwmexican.com)

ALBUQUERQUE — Attorney General Raúl Torrez aims to add another tool for prosecutors tackling cyberbullying and hazing, which he said have increasingly harmed New Mexico's young people.

## New solar project facing heat

Rural Sandoval County site near Santa Fe County border draws heavy opposition similar to Ranch Viejo proposal

By Cormac Dodd  
[cdodd@sfnwmexican.com](mailto:cdodd@sfnwmexican.com)

On the other side of the Turquoise Trail from Eldorado, another solar project is drawing heated opposition. Residents of eastern Sandoval

County have packed meeting rooms in recent months to assail a sprawling solar and battery storage development proposed for an area east of Placitas by a company headquartered in Argentina. In many ways, the dynamic is similar to what is playing out in Santa Fe County

with the Rancho Viejo Solar proposal: organized and fervent opposition to a large clean energy development, as boosters of the projects stress the need to slow the worsening impacts of climate change while neighbors worry about fire risk and other possible impacts to their homes.

The Diamond Tail solar and storage project would generate 220 megawatts

of power from solar and 110 megawatts of battery storage on a 1,833-acre site, according to a summary of the project prepared by Sandoval County Planning and Zoning. The site is about 20 miles northeast of Albuquerque and 30 miles south of Santa Fe and positioned right on the Santa Fe County border, about 5 miles northwest of Golden, a

Please see story on Page A-4

## Emergency shelter braces for freeze



Santa Fe preparing to house homeless as Red Cross' support now in doubt

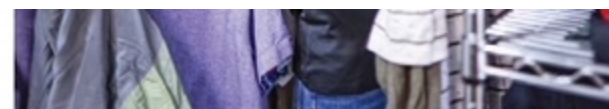
By Carina Julig  
[cjulig@sfnwmexican.com](mailto:cjulig@sfnwmexican.com)



He said at the news conference he would bet New Mexicans would line up in support of more accountability for young people, adding those who raise concerns about criminalizing the

Sergeant shared the guardian of the victim has expressed to the investigator they will not respond to follow up questions on the investigation, nor inquiries from JPO or the District

places journalists into local newsrooms. He covers child welfare and the state Children, Youth and Families Department. Learn more about Report for America at [reportforamerica.org](http://reportforamerica.org).



**Doniel McNevin, the Salvation Army's social servitor, looks for clothing for a client Thursday.**

## New solar project facing heat

*Continued from Page A-1*

presentation for the project indicates. As a result, it has stirred some discussion in Santa Fe County.

What the simultaneity of these twin land-use matters underscores is that, while many in blue-leaning New Mexico support the need for more green energy generation, such projects often face challenges as public utilities seek to meet clean energy targets set by the state.

Facing off against Diamond Tail, the East Mountains Protection Action Coalition has made its presence known. It's no different in Santa Fe County, where groups like the Clean Energy Coalition of Santa Fe County have sought to defeat the Rancho Viejo project.

"I see that both communities are very concerned about fire protection associated with incredibly large industrial lithium battery storage facilities," said Dennis Kellogg, a spokesperson for the East Mountains coalition.

The projects have support as well, with some expressing dismay about the the pushback the proposals have received.

"If you look across the country actually, there are a number of projects being opposed at any given time, and it all seems to level the same misinformation, and if you know anything about the

McQueen, D-Galisteo, who heads the House Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Committee, said he is considering a bill that would add an additional layer of government oversight for large-scale solar and battery storage projects.

"We've asked for a bill to be drafted that would direct the [Public Regulation Commission] to prepare rules dealing with appropriate siting of battery installation, solar installation and transmission lines," McQueen said.

McQueen said that under the bill, large-scale solar and battery storage developments would still require approval from local governments but it would also give the Public Regulation Commission, which is responsible for regulating public utilities, oversight over the projects based on certain regulations that would have to be created.

"I'm not divesting local authority of that control but I'm adding another layer of review," McQueen said.

### Diamond Tail solar

The project, proposed by PCR Investments, would generate a power output that would be more than the entire annual residential load of Sandoval County and Santa Fe County, according to an October presentation from the company.



Both projects are in areas strategically located near PNM substations, with the Diamond Tail site about 6 miles southeast of the existing Diamond Tail Substation PNM owns.

After a contentious meeting, the Sandoval County Planning and Zoning Commission in December recommended county commissioners give the project, which requires a zoning change to move forward, the green light. A date has not been set for that hearing, according to county Planning and Zoning Director Daniel Beaman.

The East Mountains Protection

values. PCR disputes this.

"A project that would not be considered safe would never get the financing nor the insurance needed to make construction, wrote Mariano Brannan, a PCR official, in an email. "In the event of a fire, although unlikely, the project would still be safe for the community. The distance towards the closest residence is enough for an event not to pose a risk for any neighbor."

According to its website, PNM is on track for 100% carbon-free energy by 2040. The New Mexico Energy Transition Act of 2019 requires electric utilities to generate 50% of their power from renewable sources by 2030 and 80% by 2040. Investor-owned utilities must reach 100% renewable sources by 2045 and rural electric cooperatives by 2050.

"Right project, wrong location," Kellogg said. "New Mexico is the fifth largest land mass state. There are abundant brownfields that are available for thousands of kinds of industrial installations where there is a risk."

"My group and I personally support the use of wind and solar," Kellogg said. "But it needs to go in the right location. We are not just sitting back and saying 'Not in my backyard.'"

### Santa Fe County residents look on

Santa Fe County Commissioner Camilla Bustamante mentioned the



## NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

# Battery plant fire forces evacuations

The Associated Press

MOSS LANDING, Calif. — A major fire burning Friday at one of the world's largest battery storage plants in Northern California is sending up flames and towering plumes of toxic smoke, leading to the evacuation of 1,700 people and the closure of a major highway.

The blaze in Moss Landing started Thursday. By Friday morning, however, the flames and smoke had significantly diminished in size, said Chief Joel Mendoza of the North County Fire Protection District of Monterey County.

"There's very little, if any, of a plume emitting from that building," Mendoza said. Crews were not engaging with the fire and were waiting for it to burn out, he added.

The fire has raised concerns in Santa Fe County, where a proposed solar power and battery storage facility has faced fierce opposition over fears such an incident could ignite a wildfire.

Although, Thursday's blaze did not go beyond the facility, according to Monterey County spokesperson Nicholas Pasculli.

Camilla Brom, who lives in Rancho San Marcos south of Santa Fe, is among the area residents who watched the Moss Landing fire and evacuation unfold with a particular concern. Her home is near where energy giant AES Corp. is proposing to construct a sprawling facility known as Rancho Viejo Solar.

"This is more evidence or proof how dangerous this type of a facility is," Brom said. "With this fire that's happening now, I don't know what it's going to take if this doesn't



SHMUEL THALER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Flames from a fire fill the sky Thursday at the Moss Landing Power Plant in Moss Landing, Calif. The fire has raised concerns in Santa Fe County, where a proposed solar power and battery storage facility has faced fierce opposition over wildfire fears.**

could play a role in the state's efforts to slow climate change and would be an economic win for the region. They also maintain the industry has made strides in recent years to reduce the fire risk at battery facilities.

Daniel Baker, a Santa Fe County resident who said he has professional experience working for solar companies, said he has not had time to research the fire at the Vistra Energy lithium battery plant in Moss Landing.

But he said he would "want to know when facility was installed before comparing it to a modern facility like Rancho Viejo, or

emergency meeting of the Monterey County Board of Supervisors on Friday.

"It doesn't appear that the fire department had the appropriate fire retardants to minimize this fire and have to resort to actually letting it burn, exposing all of the residents," Silvia Morales said.

Fires ignited at the Vistra plant in 2021 and 2022 due to a fire sprinkler system malfunction that resulted in some units overheating, according to *The Mercury News*.

It was unclear what caused the latest fire. Vistra said in a statement that after it was

## Russia partne Weste

By Vladimir Isachin  
The Associated Press

MOSCOW — Russian President Vladimir Putin and Iranian counterpart Ebrahim Raisi signed a partnership pact Friday as tensions between the two countries deepened in the face of Western pressure.

Russian and Iranian officials say the "comprehensive partnership treaty" covers areas — from trade and cooperation to science and culture. The treaty could be expected to be signed soon.

Putin praised the "real breakthrough" in conditions for the sustainable development of Russia, Iran and the region.

He said the agreement and economic cooperation was still insufficient. He hopes the new treaty will clear bureaucratic barriers and expand ties. The pact added the countries will resolve technical issues to advance projects to use natural gas to Iran.



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