

Letter of objection : Springdale Solar plant
Application number 8703.

To whom it may concern,

I wish to lodge my objection to the establishment of a solar plant in the area of Tallagandra Lane, Sutton NSW.

The reasons for my objection are many but can be summarised as being that the solar plant is the right type of power generation in the wrong location.

The proposed site for the solar plant is contrary to the NSW State Government's established energy zones. These areas are situated in areas that have been identified as ideal for renewable energy. To ignore the planning strategy of the Government is nonsensical and raises the question of why the chosen site has been proposed. It is my firm belief that the site is part of the Barr ACT Government strongly held view that the ACT will use 100% renewable energy in the near future. It is possible that the idea is that if the voters can see it, they will believe it, therefore there are votes in it? The hand of former ACT Environment Minister Simon Cornell is in the project so I would not discount the argument that the siting has political implications and has been influenced by the Barr Government.

The Yass Valley Council has opposed the establishment of further wind plants in the area, it is reasonable to assume that they would not vote in favour of a massive solar plant. The area on which Tallagandra lane is situated is rural residential. This allows for farms as small as 100acres for rural living. This is not a sensible area for the establishment of a solar plant. This area is also some of the best super fine wool growing country in Australia. It is quite absurd to remove 850acres of prime grazing land from the area, reducing the stock carrying capacity at a time when we are attempting to be the food bowl of Asia.

Our 51ha farm is part of the Greater Goorooyaroo project. We have planted over half of our property with native trees and have reduced our stock levels (at great financial cost) to help improve the biodiversity of the area. The solar plant will be between the Goorooyaroo native animal breeding site and our farm. The connectivity of the grassy woodland areas where native fauna breed will be severely disrupted. The animals will have no cover from predators over the 850acre site meaning that the whole plan of safe, vegetated corridors will be for nothing and our efforts will be heavily negated. This plant strikes a blow against biodiversity.

Greening Australia and other organisations spend a lot of Government money trying to plant trees to improve biodiversity, reduce salinity and reduce silt in

the runoff over the Murrumbidgee catchment area. The site for the Springdale plant is completely at odds with these aims. The shading caused by the panels will reduce native grass growth and be devoid of trees, thereby increasing salinity due to a raised water table and increasing the level of silt and salt in the runoff. Further to this, the runoff effect of the panels will mean that the rain will hit the ground in the same manner as if it were poured from a jug, this will cause it to dislodge soil in greater volumes, adding to the mobile silt. These are all negative effects on the Murrumbidgee catchment area.

The proposed site is prone to long lasting fog on many days of the year. On a large number of winter days, when the ACT is clear, the valleys along Tallagandra Lane are covered in fog until late in the morning. This will impact on the ability of the site to produce maximum power, as will the undulating nature of the land. The reasons for this will be early morning and late afternoon shading due to the hills to the East and West of the site. We are subject to shorter sunlight hours in the valleys on Tallagandra Lane, further adding to the unsuitable nature of the site. Whilst I have discussed road safety later in this objection, the road hazard due to the extreme increase in traffic very early in the morning (trucks and workers) will have an exponential increase in the likelihood of head on collision as locals make their way to Canberra for work and School. The visibility in fog is often less than 50m, making driving on an unsealed road without a centreline very dangerous. Tallagandra Lane is used by residents of Murrumbateman, Gundaroo, Yass and Gunning as a shortcut to North Canberra.

The NSW Department of Environment and the ACT Government are attempting to keep the areas near the ACT development free. The Solar plant is a 850 acre intensive development, I would expect that this is contrary to those plans.

The planned screening trees for the site (single row of trees) will not provide any meaningful screening value for around 20 years. We have planted many varieties of native vegetation on our farm over the last 12 years for screening purposes, thereby having extensive experience in the matter. The vegetation efforts are a mere token and should be discounted as ineffective and void.

The effect of the solar plant on the local residents has been understated in a number of ways. There will be considerable visual impact on far more residents than the proposal states, due to the undulating nature of the land. The residents who have moved into the area over the last 10-15 years have done so to move away from development, not to be surrounded by 850 acres of it! To have 450,000 reflectors built nearby is completely at odds with the lifestyle that we have sought. The land values are very high close to Canberra

due to the short travel times and the income values of the Territory (highest average in Australia). It is beyond dispute that there will be a drop in land values in the area for a greater number of residents than the proposal states.

The traffic load on Tallagandra Lane will increase to 75 heavily laden trucks and 400 cars a day during the very long construction phase. The generally poor condition of our local roads is a major cost to locals through stone damage, increased wear and tear from vibration and flat tyres. There has been no proposal to improve any of the roads, meaning that our cost of living will be further increased over a long period. The single skin bitumen roads in the area will be severely impacted, this will lead to a decrease in road safety and increase the likelihood of accidents. There will be severe deterioration in the road shoulders as large trucks will be forced to pass each other in opposite directions, thereby "putting a wheel in the dirt". When large trucks do this, they destroy the bitumen edge. The very large number of cyclist who use the route proposed from Sutton the Tallagandra lane will have a greatly reduced level of safety on their rides due to the poor road and volume of trucks. A number of young adults in our area drive to school on their P plates as many schools are not serviced by bus. They will be forced to deal with the trucks on a daily basis during their commute. The position of the site close to Canberra will impact the road safety of a very large number of people, possibly up to 1000.

In summary, my objection to the Springdale solar plant is based on the simple fact that the site has been chosen for the convenience of the operator and its customers. No consideration has been given to the NSW Government renewable energy zones that were established to deal with this issue. Australia needs to change to renewable energy to secure the environment for the future. While this is true, we would not build a new Airport in the middle of a city and we cannot allow a massive solar plant which carries major environmental and human costs to be built in the middle of a rural residential area. There are countless areas in Australia where a solar plant could be established close to high tension power lines which have almost zero population. These areas are flatter, less fog prone, are not in major river catchments, have little road traffic and are far less agriculturally productive. There are no sound reasons for establishing the Springdale solar plant in Sutton. Electricity is portable, once it is generated, it can be sent via the network to any location. The human, agricultural and environmental costs of this project in this location are too great.

Kind regards,

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