

June 7, 2019



Protecting Marin Since 1934

Mr. Brian Crawford
Community Development Director
Marin County Community Development Agency
3501 Civic Center Drive, Suite 308
San Rafael, CA 94903

Re: Silveira Ranch Solar Photovoltaic System

Dear Mr. Crawford:

Marin Conservation League (MCL) has reviewed the proposed Silveira Ranch Solar project, now under review by the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) for aviation and/or Gness Field impacts. We see no conflicts with aviation, but the project deserves review to examine its potential for conflict with the agricultural zoning and uses permitted under the Countywide Plan, and the precedent this could establish for similarly zoned lands in Marin County.

The Silveira ranch has traditionally been a dairy ranch and this intense development is not compatible with cattle grazing. Staff suggestions made in the Pre-application letter to the applicant recommended the pasturing of sheep, goats or chickens as consistent with agricultural use. This seems to raise a new spectrum of issues, since the site is apparently being leased to the solar energy producer.

MCL supports solar facilities built in appropriate locations to provide renewable energy, and we appreciate the proposed setback from wetlands and creek as well as the discrete placement with tree buffer, out of the line of sight and low elevation from the freeway. The county should, however, be cautious about implications of this commercial activity on agriculturally zoned lands to ensure that placement does not change Marin's highly valued agricultural landscape.

This case is another example of the county's need for a broad policy for solar development so projects such as this one have common standards. This case-by-case processing is time consuming and frustrating for everyone involved.

MCL strongly recommends that the merits of this project be reviewed by the Planning Commission before approval is considered by the county.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Linda J. Novy".

Linda J. Novy, President

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Susan Stompe".

Susan Stompe, Land Use and Transportation Committee Chair

Cc: Tom Lai, Assistant Director, County of Marin Community Development Agency
Sabrina Sihakom, Planner, County of Marin
Judy Arnold, Supervisor, County of Marin
The Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC)

