

Andrea Sopkovich  
2924 Evergreen Dr  
Cambridge, WI 53523

June 6, 2021

Dear Dane County Zoning and Land Regulation Committee,

I implore the Dane County Zoning and Land Regulation committee to formally evaluate the Koshkonong Solar plant proposal in the towns of Christiana and Deerfield. Now before you say this is a matter for the Public Service Commission, please consider your role in protecting the rights of villages, your role ensuring land is being used in the manner in which it is zoned, and your role in guiding the future growth in the county.

Right now we've got a situation in which the village of Cambridge is under serious threat as is the School District of Cambridge. This solar plant proposal is so massive, you could fit a city in its place. Please listen carefully to what I bring before you for action.

#### **Big enough to fit a city**

- The project area covers 10 square miles. For comparison, the city of Sun Prairie covers 12.9 miles and is home to 33,000 people.
- This project will engulf much of the town of Christiana. It will be the largest solar plant in the state.

#### **The fastest growing county isn't the place for a massive solar plant**

- Dane county absorbs 24% of the state's growth each year, with about 6,000 additional residents moving in annually. Dane County is growing twice as fast as any other county.
- We need space for that growth, space that the town of Christiana, village of Cambridge, town of Deerfield can absorb if not overrun by solar panels. People treasure our small communities that blend small town life with country living and agriculture.

#### **An industrial project shouldn't be allowed to block the growth of a village**

- The solar plant blocks Cambridge's residential and economic growth on the only two sides of town which can expand. Solar panels would span both sides of 12/18 on its western border and the entire the southern border, leaving Cambridge nowhere to grow.

#### **The land is in Farmland Preservation and solar plants are not farms**

- Dane County and the PSC need to respect the Town of Christiana's Land Use Plan and its goals to preserve productive farmlands, the rural lifestyle and agricultural character of the town.
- The farmland is among the most fertile in the state and the land is governed by Farmland Preservation restrictions which block development. Solar plants are not farms!
- Despite the claims of solar companies, the farmland will not be "rested." It will be abused and left unfarmable. During construction, top soil is stripped and left in piles to blow and

wash away. Gravel roads are installed. Underground infrastructure is put in place. If the solar panels are ever removed, the land is left with destruction and manmade materials. It's unlikely it will ever return to farmland.

- There are alternate locations in Wisconsin where the land is much less fertile and has less economic potential, where there are fewer existing homes, and where reasonably sized solar plants may be welcomed.

### **Why strip funding from a top performing school district?**

The school district stands to lose substantial funding in two ways:

- If Cambridge and Christiana are stifled, the school district is stifled. Because funding is proportional, any school district that isn't growing will lose funding.
- Taxes from the solar acres will go into a utility aid fund rather than being collected locally. Schools get no money from that fund.

### **Why select such a populated rural area?**

- As a satellite community of a major metro area, our countryside is dotted with homes, mostly owned by non-participating landowners. In fact, there are only a handful of families contracted with the developer.
- There are much less populated rural areas available in the state of Wisconsin.

Dane County planning leadership should pause and evaluate what is best for the long-term growth of the county, the use of its land, and the needs of its people as a whole. We should *proactively* select the best location for solar plants, instead of allowing developers to determine a location without careful consideration for what's best for the people of Wisconsin, Dane County, and our local communities!

Note: My family lives in the town of Christiana, outside the border of the proposed solar plant, but within one mile of it, making our home within the project. Our children attend the School District of Cambridge, which includes children from many towns surrounding Cambridge. We, like most families in this area, consider our home to be all the communities within the school district. I am acting to protect our entire community from the infringement on the village of Cambridge and the loss of funds to our school district..

Sincerely,  
Andrea Sopkovich  
Resident of the town of Christiana