



The voice of our community

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June 15, 2009

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Board of Supervisors  
Clerk of the Board  
105 E. Anapamu Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

RE: Solar Energy Systems Permit Requirements Ordinance Amendment,  
Board Agenda of June 23, 2009

Dear Supervisors:

The Montecito Association supports revision of the permitting process to facilitate simple, expedited review and approval of solar energy systems while ensuring that such systems are appropriately designed and located. Unfortunately, in the rush to comply with State law, the draft ordinance fails to include standards to address the design or location of freestanding systems and removes existing opportunities for neighbors to receive notice of an application prior to approval.

We believe that the County has the authority to incorporate standards for the siting of freestanding solar systems into a ministerial permit process as long as the standards have a relationship to public health and safety and their evaluation does not require the exercise of discretion. Standards related to the size and location of freestanding systems are necessary to ensure that systems are not located in a way that would adversely affect line of sight on roadways or cause glare that could be detrimental to neighbors or hamper road safety. These would include requiring structures to be located outside of setback areas, limiting the height of systems, limiting the size of systems to that necessary to meet onsite energy demand and requiring appropriate screening and orientation away from neighboring properties. The Board should refer to the attached guidelines developed by staff and the Montecito Planning Commission at the hearing of February 25 for examples of appropriate standards.

We believe that installation of solar energy systems can be encouraged together with good planning practice. Please refer this matter back to staff for development of a process that meets both goals.

Sincerely,

  
Peter van Duinwyk, President

cc: Montecito Planning Commission

attachment