

From: [Faith Van De Putte](#)
To: [Colin Maycock](#)
Cc: [Jane Fuller](#); [Cindy Wolf](#); [Christine Minney](#); [Jessica Hudson](#)
Subject: Review of Docket Requests 24-0005, 24-0006, 24-0007 and 24-0008
Date: Friday, November 22, 2024 3:56:53 PM
Attachments: [Power Generation & Agri solar Docket Request \(1\).pdf](#)
[image001.png](#)

Colin,.

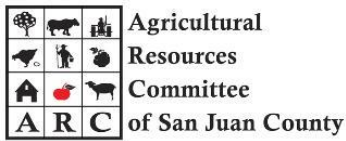
Please find attached the ARC's Review of Docket Requests 24-0005, 24-0006, 24-0007 and 24-0008.

Thank you,

Faith

Faith Van De Putte (she/her)|*Agricultural Resource Committee Coordinator*
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Working Hours: 2:00-5:00pm, Monday – Friday

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Memorandum

TO: Collin Maycock, Planner
Jane Fuller, County Council
Cindy Wolf, County Council
Christine Minney, County Council
Mike Thomas, County Manager

From: San Juan County Agricultural Resource Committee (ARC)

Date: 11/22/24

Subject: Review of Docket Requests 24-0005, 24-0006, 24-0007 and 24-0008

The San Juan County Agricultural Resources Committee (ARC) recognizes the critical importance of addressing climate change, energy resilience, and agricultural viability in tandem. Agrivoltaics, the simultaneous use of land for solar energy production and agriculture, presents a promising opportunity to achieve these goals. However, the development of agrivoltaic systems must be carefully balanced to ensure they protect agricultural resource lands, and sustain long-term food production capabilities.

The intent of the ARC's recommendations are to support the creation of a clear regulatory pathway for agrivoltaic projects in the San Juan County Land Use Code. Such a pathway will ensure that agrivoltaic systems are designed and implemented to maximize mutual benefits for energy production and agricultural sustainability while mitigating potential risks to soil health, water resources, and agricultural productivity.

Docket Request 24-0006

Description of Proposal: Encourage the location of solar generation facilities on or over existing impervious surfaces when feasible and allow conditional use permitting for commercial power generation facilities in RFF areas and to add special conditions for any such proposed use on Resource Lands.

ARC Recommendation: The ARC recommends approving this request and adding a project to DCD's work plan. Locating solar facilities on impervious surfaces minimizes the loss of arable land, while conditional use permitting in Rural Farm Forest (RFF) reduces the pressure on resource lands for commercial power generation facility siting. Adding special conditions for projects on Resource Lands ensures that farming and food production remain central to land use decisions, safeguarding these critical resources for future generations while addressing the need for renewable power generation.

Docket Request 24-0007

Description of Proposal: The applicant requests a new Land use "agri-solar generation" be

added to the Agricultural and Forestry Uses and allowed in all rural land use designations, with the exception of Special Lands. The proposal includes a definition: “Agri-solar generation” means equipment or machinery that produces fossil-free electricity from solar renewable energy sources co-located with Rural Designation and Resource Lands used for agriculture, and can include energy storage.

ARC Recommendations: The ARC recommends approving this docket request with the following changes and considerations:

- **Use the term Agrivoltaic:** The ARC recommends using the term agrivoltaic for consistency with existing Comprehensive Plan reference. The Comprehensive Plan Utilities Element 8.5.A Goal 6 states “Ensure that solar installations are sited and designed in a manner that minimizes impacts on agricultural land, allows for flexibility in future agricultural activity and maximizes potential for multiple benefits from “agrivoltaics”.”
- **Change the proposed definition:** The proposed definition is problematic for the following reasons:
 1. *Overemphasis on Energy Generation:* It focuses primarily on electricity production and energy storage, neglecting the role of agriculture as an equal and active component.
 2. *Lack of Specificity About Co-Location:* Simply being "co-located" does not ensure that solar infrastructure is designed to support or enhance agricultural activities, such as grazing, crop production, or soil health improvements.
 3. *Ambiguity About Agricultural Use:* The phrase "used for agriculture" is unclear and does not specify whether the agricultural use must be ongoing, productive, or integral to the solar installation.

ARC proposed definition- “Agrivoltaics” means the dual use of land for solar energy generation and active agricultural production ensuring agricultural productivity and environmental sustainability while supporting renewable energy goals.

- **Create Performance Standards** There is a growing body of work that outlines best practices and performance standards for agrivoltaic projects. Having these clearly outlined would reduce regulatory uncertainty and protect our agricultural land. Some considerations are:
 - Protect and enhance land for continued agricultural use
 - Benefit local farmers and agricultural viability
 - Protect soil and water resources
 - Include a decommissioning plan including financial assurances
- Consider utilizing the [Least Conflict Solar Siting](#) process to engage the community in this process

Docket Request 24-0005

Description of Proposal: Adopt UDC code to prohibit new commercial power-generation facilities that use fossil fuels as a primary source of fuel and limit permitting for commercial

power generation facilities to facilities that use renewable energy.

Docket Request 24-0008

Description of Proposal: Add a new Land Use, "Utility renewable power-generation facilities" to the Utilities Uses section of Table 18.30.040.

ARC Recommendation for 24-0005 and 24-0008: The ARC emphasizes the urgency of addressing Docket Requests 24-0006 and 24-0007. Regarding 24-0005 and 24-0008, which tackle similar issues through different approaches, the ARC supports the Department of Community Development's (DCD) staff recommendations for these requests.

The ARC appreciates the opportunity to provide input on these docket requests, recognizing their importance in advancing renewable energy while safeguarding agricultural viability and production. Our recommendations aim to ensure agrivoltaic systems support both energy goals and the long-term sustainability of agriculture in San Juan County. Thank you for seeking the ARC's input, and we look forward to continued collaboration.

Sincerely,

Lori Ann David, ARC Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lori Ann David". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L" and "A".

Faith Van De Putte, ARC Coordinator