

**Mary A. Ward**

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**Subject:** FW: Attn: ELUC on 9/4/2025 - case 162-S-25

**From:** Lisa S <[lbhs1234@gmail.com](mailto:lbhs1234@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Friday, August 15, 2025 2:31 PM

**To:** County Board <[CountyBoard@champaigncountyil.gov](mailto:CountyBoard@champaigncountyil.gov)>

**Subject:** Attn: ELUC on 9/4/2025 - case 162-S-25

**CAUTION:** External email, be careful when opening.

August 15, 2025

To the members of the Environment and Land Use Committee,

As the committee meets to consider the proposal for solar farms along the Piatt County and Champaign County borders near Mansfield, each of the members are tasked to consider the following information. Currently the strategic plan of the Champaign County Board includes “management of natural resources” and “ensure water quality and quantity from Mahomet Aquifer.” Furthermore, in goal four, the board is tasked with “support planned growth to balance economic growth with natural resource preservation”, as well as, “support intergovernmental cooperation in planning land use and fringe areas to contain urban sprawl and preserve farmland.” If this committee ignores environmental and safety concerns regarding **case 162-S-25 from petitioner Mahomet Solar I, LLC**, it will have failed to meet its strategy.

Solar energy is supposed to be beneficial so then it’s construction and placement should also be beneficial. In this case, acquisition of these acres and construction of solar farms on designated wetlands and declining prairie lands will further serve to erase the true nature and beauty of our homelands. Not only is it changing the historical geography of Champaign and Piatt Counties, the indiscriminate placement of these solar farms will negatively impact the surrounding area due to:

- Impairment of travel on area roads which are already in disrepair
- Safety concerns as the proposed location is alongside a nearby, active railroad line, electrical substation and gas line
- Disregard for wetlands designation and its inhabitants
- Decreased property values impacting long-time citizens of the area
- Significant risk to the Mahomet Aquifer

Each of these concerns bears its own weight. But the final notation will impact the greatest number of citizens. There have been documented environmental impacts on water quality alone due to solar farms. Nearly one million citizens including some from Champaign and Piatt Counties rely on the Mahomet Aquifer as their only water source. And if these solar farms are approved, the risks to that water includes:

- Runoff and erosion
- Instances of water pollution particularly related to stormwater management and construction permits
- Groundwater depletion as solar-powered pumps can lead to increased water extraction from aquifers which can threaten long-term aquifer viability
- Impact on soil health if the soil moisture and erosion are not well managed.

Currently, solar farms receive federal oversight by the Department of Revenue which is not specialized in the necessary balances of human need and environmental protection. Instead, it is this committee's role to exercise its knowledge and authority to protect our natural resources and the Mahomet Aquifer. If the committee needs to further entertain these proposals, then before any further action:

- Require all solar projects to be evaluated by the EPA for a full land assessment
- Engage local conservation experts to assess wetland impact
- Avoid any potential impact on our primary water source, the Mahomet Aquifer.

Clearly, this letter voices **opposition to case 162-S-25**. Be aware, I do not live near these sites but do receive my water from the Mahomet Aquifer; I am a longtime Midwesterner and care about my neighbors. You, as a board, need to reconsider this project and end further consideration of its construction. If you wish to be serious about environmental protection, as well as your neighbors, then do it the right way. Protect our water and wildlife habitats - keep Blue Ridge and Mahomet Townships safe and beautiful for the generations to come.

Sincerely,

Lisa Schwarzentraub, Mahomet, IL  
[lbhs1234@gmail.com](mailto:lbhs1234@gmail.com)

**Mary A. Ward**

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**Subject:** FW: Opposition to Solar Project, Case 162-S-25

**From:** Alexis Godbee <alexis.godbee@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 21, 2025 10:51 AM  
**To:** County Board <CountyBoard@champaigncountyil.gov>  
**Subject:** Opposition to Solar Project, Case 162-S-25

**CAUTION:** External email, be careful when opening.

Good morning,

I kindly ask that this email be sent to all members of the ELUC.

I am writing to express my opposition to the solar project (case 162-S-25) proposed near Spring Lake, and urge you to vote NO for the project.

I understand renewable energy has its place, but the proposed location and layout is not appropriate for that area. Renewable energy should be incorporated into communities safely, and there has to be compromise in order to make a lasting impact long term. Please do not allow this solar project to be built so close to our homes when there are so many risks in the short and long term of the project.

At the last public hearing on 8/14, Summit Ridge Energy from Virginia had admitted they have not yet decommissioned a project. Their company was started in 2017. How can they uphold their many verbal (and written) claims without experience?

I am sure you have read many emails coming through on the opinions of this project, and I hope you have looked over the testimony given at the previous meetings, and all previous emails sent in to the zoning board by concerned citizens. I kindly ask that you protect me, my family, and my neighbors from the intrusion of this solar power plant, and rather work with the community to find more appropriate locations for renewable energy projects that can be supported by the majority long term.

I would like to ask you to deny all requested waivers from the developer. I believe that approving the requested waivers could set a precedent for other companies that says the rules in place by the County don't actually have to be upheld.

I am happy to hear your thoughts and continue this conversation if you want to respond.

Thank you for your time and attention,  
Alexis Godbee

## Mary A. Ward

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**From:** MSLA Board <mslaboard76@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 22, 2025 8:46 AM  
**To:** County Board  
**Subject:** Solar Farm Case 162-s-25  
**Attachments:** Data Analytics Draft MSLA Solar Farm Feedback 7.7.25GG.docx; SOLAR FARM LETTER FROM MSLA BOARD.pdf

**CAUTION:** External email, be careful when opening.

Please forward the attached letter and the data analytics to all members of the County Board and the Environment and Land Use Committee.

Thanks so much,  
Mahomet Spring Lake Board  
Mike Murphy President  
Gary Giger Vice President  
Nancy Goglia Secretary  
Sherri Kenner Treasurer  
Area Representatives  
Diane Cousert  
Diana Harmon  
Alana Harris  
Susan Williams

## 1) Quantitative Summary:

- **Initial Association Survey (February 2025):**
  - 45 survey responses
  - 70% of responding MSLA members opposed the proposed solar farm.
  - 17% were in favor,
  - 13% neutral, or undecided
  
- **Meeting Participation Feedback (June 2025)**
  - Total Lots Represented in Meeting: 27
  - Expressed Opinions in Meeting:
    - Opposed to Solar Farm: 13
    - In Favor / Prefer Solar Farm to Other Development: 6
    - Neutral / No Comment / Undecided: 8

## 2) Qualitative Summary

### A. **Initial Association Survey (February 2025):**

#### **Misinformation and Misconceptions**

- A small number of responses included inappropriate, offensive, and factually incorrect statements reflecting misinformation about solar energy and its supposed social or biological effects (e.g., impacts on sexuality or animal behavior).
- These responses suggest a need for public education efforts to address myths and improve factual understanding of solar energy projects.

#### **Environmental and Ecological Concerns**

- **Impact on Wildlife:** Many respondents expressed worry about the displacement of local wildlife (e.g., birds, deer, hawks, and eagles) and loss of habitat.
- **Soil Erosion & Runoff:** Several comments raised concerns about potential soil erosion and runoff into the nearby lake, which could affect water quality.
- **Lake Health:** Multiple homeowners mentioned apprehensions about how the project might harm Spring Lake's ecosystem and the financial investments made by residents to maintain it.

#### **Property Values and Aesthetic Impact**

- A recurring theme was concern over the visual impact of the solar farm, described by some as a "blight on the landscape."
- Fears were expressed about potential reductions in property values and diminished quality of life due to the proximity of the installation to residential areas.

### **Noise, Safety, and Health Concerns**

- Some residents cited potential noise from the project, radio frequencies, and risks from train derailments or fire hazards as health and safety concerns, particularly given the proximity to homes and a rail line.
- Concerns about possible leaking from damaged solar panels into groundwater and wells were also noted.

### **Procedural and Zoning Fairness**

- Several comments questioned the fairness of setback guidelines and whether subdivisions should receive protections equivalent to municipalities.
- Some respondents suggested that project developers and supporters might be underestimating or misrepresenting the full impact of the development.

### **Comparative Support and Conditional Approval**

- A few respondents stated they would prefer the solar farm over higher-density housing developments or chemical-intensive agriculture.
- Some expressed conditional support for the project provided environmental safeguards, erosion control measures, and protections for the lake are clearly addressed and enforced.

### **Desire for More Information**

- Several responses indicated a lack of clear, accessible information about the project's environmental impact, water protection measures, and long-term management plans.
- Respondents expressed a need for public meetings, transparent communication, and detailed mitigation plans before forming an opinion.

## **B. MSL Annual Meeting (June 2025):**

The proposed solar farm project near Spring Lake has sparked a range of opinions among members of the Mahomet Spring Lake Association (MSLA). While the board has focused on lake health and environmental facts, member responses reveal distinct, recurring themes: environmental and aesthetic concerns, property values, future land use anxieties, and trust in the development process.

### **Environmental and Lake Health Concerns**

- A primary theme in both board deliberations and community feedback involves the environmental impact of the solar farm, particularly as it relates to the health of Spring Lake. The board proactively researched potential risks, including chemical runoff, panel breakage, pesticide use, and erosion during construction. They concluded that existing regulations and practices would likely mitigate these risks. Nevertheless, several members voiced ongoing concerns about long-term maintenance, the environmental lifespan of panels, temperature

changes to the lake, and wildlife displacement. Some emphasized the unknowns about waste disposal and whether thorough environmental studies would be conducted.

#### **Aesthetic and Property Value Impact**

- Aesthetic preferences and the potential impact on property values emerged as another major theme. Many members expressed opposition rooted in the loss of open agricultural land and rural character, fearing that the presence of a solar farm would be unsightly and lead to lower home values. This concern was compounded by perceptions that solar farms differ from residential or agricultural aesthetics traditionally valued in the community.

#### **Future Land Use and Development Trade-offs**

- An important sub-theme centered on land use alternatives and the inevitability of change. Some members expressed a preference for the solar farm over rumored developments such as subdivisions or apartment complexes, viewing it as a lesser disruptive option. Several comments noted that Mahomet's Master Development Plan indicates future development in this area, making the preservation of open farmland increasingly unlikely. This sense of limited choices created a pragmatic stance for some members, even if they did not enthusiastically support the solar farm itself.

#### **Trust, Transparency, and Representation**

- Underlying many comments was a concern about trust in both the developer and the association's representation of its members' views. Notably, Lot X reported that it was stated at a variance meeting that the MSLA was in favor of the project, despite a 70% opposition rate in the association poll. Additionally, some members expressed skepticism about the accountability of out-of-state developers and long-term stewardship of the land. Questions about transparency, future maintenance responsibilities, and proper adherence to zoning laws further fueled wariness.

### **SUMMARY MSLA SOLAR FARM FEEDBACK (2025)**

In early 2025, the Mahomet Spring Lake Association (MSLA) gathered member feedback on a proposed nearby solar farm through a survey and its Annual Meeting (June 2025).

**Quantitatively**, the February 2025 survey received **45 responses**, with **70% opposed**, **17% in favor**, and **13% neutral or undecided**. At the **June 2025 Annual Meeting**, **27 lots were represented**: 13 voiced opposition, 6 expressed support or preference for solar over other developments, and 8 remained neutral or withheld comment.

**Qualitatively**, several clear themes emerged. The primary concerns involved **environmental impacts**, particularly potential **runoff**, **soil erosion**, **wildlife displacement**, and **harm to Spring Lake's health**. While the board found existing regulations adequate to address risks, members sought assurances about long-term maintenance, panel disposal, and environmental monitoring.

**Aesthetic impacts and potential property value decline** were repeatedly cited, with residents fearing the loss of the area's open, rural character. Some members pragmatically viewed the solar farm as preferable to dense housing developments likely under Mahomet's master plan.

Draft of data analytics prepared by Alana Harris 7.7.2025

Concerns about **process transparency, zoning fairness, and long-term accountability** surfaced, with some members frustrated by perceived misrepresentation of community sentiment and skepticism about developer responsibility.

Additionally, a few responses reflected **misinformation about solar energy**, underscoring the need for improved public education.

Overall, while a minority favored the solar farm as a lesser-impact alternative, most members expressed opposition rooted in environmental, aesthetic, and procedural concerns.



Our HOA membership did not have the opportunity to meet in person to discuss the proposed Solar Farm until June 2025. An initial outline survey conducted in February 2025 showed that 70% of respondents opposed the project, though limited context was available at the time. During the in-person meeting, members were able to elaborate on their concerns, and a majority voted against the proposal. The key themes of our concerns were —

#### **A. Environmental and Ecological Concerns**

- **Wildlife Displacement:** Potential disruption to local species such as deer, hawks, and eagles.
- **Soil Erosion & Runoff:** Risk of sediment entering Spring Lake, degrading water quality. Significant investment has already been made by our community to remove the sediment.
- **Lake Health:** Concerns about chemical runoff, panel breakage, and long-term ecological damage.

#### **B. Aesthetic and Property Value Impacts**

- **Visual Impact:** Described by some as a “blight” that threatens the rural character.
- **Property Values:** Fears of depreciation due to proximity and appearance of the solar farm.

#### **C. Noise, Safety, and Health**

- **Noise & RF Emissions:** Worries about operational noise and electromagnetic interference.
- **Safety Risks:** Fire hazards, potential train derailments, and groundwater contamination from damaged panels.

Our community remains deeply concerned about the short- and long-term impacts of the proposed solar farm, particularly regarding the health of Spring Lake—our most valuable natural and recreational asset. Based on factors detailed above and as the majority of our association membership opposed the proposed solar farm, the Spring Lake HOA would like to state in writing that our HOA is opposed to the proposed solar farm. Our HOA is providing our more detailed analysis of the community concerns.

The Spring Lake HOA urges that the proposal process prioritizes environmental protection, takes into account our community’s input, and allows for a transparent planning process.

Thank You, Mahomet Spring Lake association Board

## Mary A. Ward

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**From:** Lisa Fredericksen <lisalfredericksen@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 26, 2025 7:24 AM  
**To:** County Board  
**Subject:** Fwd: Proposed solar farm/ near Spring Lake/Mahomet

**CAUTION:** External email, be careful when opening.

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Lisa Fredericksen <lisalfredericksen@gmail.com>  
**Date:** Wed, Aug 13, 2025 at 10:09 PM  
**Subject:** Proposed solar farm/ near Spring Lake/Mahomet  
**To:** <zoningdept@co.champaign.il.us>

I'm writing to express my concern and opposition to the proposed SOLAR FARM near Spring Lake in Mahomet.

The developers have presented a proposal which seems vague and at times inaccurate. The developers, who have only been in business since 2017, deny that wildlife will be affected, deny any noise will be generated and do not have any solid numbers on the electricity generated. The panels will be placed close to a heavily travelled highway and a railroad track and quite close to a neighborhood of homes.

Individuals who are familiar with energy (engineers) will state that solar energy is best used as a supplemental addition to existing buildings on an individual basis (rooftops). By nature, once farmland is used for solar panels, it is not feasible or safe to return the land to an agricultural land (similar to designating land into a landfill).

Sandwich, IL in recent past years had their community leaders support the stopping of a proposed solar farm in their area. My understanding is the Mahomet Village Board is not taking a stance on this as the proposed project is on land outside the city limits and their long range plan is focused on the eastern side of Mahomet.

Mahomet has some of the most valuable farm land in the world. Rich, black soil left by glaciers many, many years ago. For people who haven't lived elsewhere, or maybe haven't travelled extensively they might not understand that there is a limit on agricultural land. Here in Central Illinois we have one of the most valuable assets on the planet. Fantastic soil!!

Summit Energy has tried to address what the future could look like...Will someone buy out the land at some point? What if the panels are damaged or broken by a tornado? (Manoa, a neighboring small community had their solar farm destroyed by a storm). How would the solar farm be dismantled after it becomes obsolete? The reality is this company hasn't yet addressed these issues because the company is young and the technology for the paneled farms is relatively new.

Mahomet is a great community. Because of our small size we have great community involvement. The schools are excellent, the police and fire department are top notch. We are a safe community and we have several jewels in the Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve and River Bend. We have locally owned and managed businesses and active church communities.

I think it would be premature to approve of this project. Because the Village Board hadn't addressed the issues, there are still a lot of people that don't even know the ramifications of the solar farm. But there are 300+ people that have signed a petition in opposition to the solar farm.

Respectfully yours,  
Lisa Fredericksen

## Mary A. Ward

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**From:** Deb Caparoon <debcaparoon@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 26, 2025 7:36 AM  
**To:** County Board  
**Subject:** Solar Farm Spring Lake Mahomet

**CAUTION:** External email, be careful when opening.

Good morning,

I am writing to express my opposition to the solar farm in Mahomet near Spring Lake. I moved out to Spring Lake in 2017 for the peace and quiet that this small community, nature and wildlife bring. I am very concerned about what a solar farm that close to a small community outside of town will do. The noise alone will change the environment around us. It will destroy the peace and quiet that we have all come to love and enjoy. Oh I know they are telling you that won't be the case but have you been to a solar farm? They are not quiet.

Other concerns are who deals with the mess when these panels are damaged or destroyed or basically no longer good for use or if the company goes out of business? They will tell you whatever you want to hear to get this approved. Why are we as a community considering signing on for something that could be very costly to us and provide so very little benefit at all.

Why this farm plot? Why right next to a subdivision? There are reasons those zoning laws were put into place. There are so many other options for where this solar farm could be placed. Right next to a subdivision is the worst choice. Why not build solar canopies over the many parking lots we have or on the rooftops of local businesses? Why permanently destroy our precious farmland.

There are so many risks and concerns, too many to list in this short email. I am hoping when it is time to vote you will vote no to place this solar farm in this location. Let's find a better location. There are many better options.

Let me ask one last question, if they were planning this solar farm right next to your house, how would you vote? Would you want it right next door to your home? If your answer is no, then I am asking you to vote the same as if it was you for the many of us that live in this area. It will affect our property values, our way of life, and the life of many wild animals in our area (Eagles cause we have at least 1 pair, Osprey, deer, turkeys, geese, ducks, rabbits, owls just to name a few). All of these things will be negatively impacted if not disappear from the area if this solar farm is approved. Please look for another location,

Sincerely,  
Spring Lake resident - Deb Caparoon

## Mary A. Ward

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**From:** Linda L. Hambleton <linpersin@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 28, 2025 10:21 PM  
**To:** Emily Rodriguez; Jennifer Locke; ale7496@yahoo.com; Eric Thorsland; County Board; John Farney; ericfor1@yahoo.com; Jilmala Rogers; Rick Hambleton  
**Subject:** 162-S-25 Mahomet IL Solar 1, Sept 4th Meeting

**CAUTION:** External email, be careful when opening.

We are writing in opposition of the proposed Mahomet IL Solar 1 project. Living in our rural community for the past 28 years has been rewarding. It's quiet. It doesn't have the hustle and bustle of living in town or in the city. It's why most of us in this area moved here. We are not against renewable energy we are just against it being put on 'prime' farmland and so close to residences. Here are our oppositions:

- ***Prime farmland being used that is our national security, our economic future.*** It feeds our country and should not be sacrificed for unreliable green energy. For this, the USDA has now stopped funding these solar projects.
- ***Land degradation from the heavy equipment in the construction of these solar farms.*** We currently have drainage issues in our subdivision in Spring Lake. This will just add to the issues not to mention the erosion and the fact that this land will not be suitable for farming again. And finally, the heavy equipment compacting the soil and the creation of the access road will increase water runoff. We already have tile issues in our subdivision and this will only make matters worse.
- ***Aesthetic concerns.*** We do not want to look out our front door or back door and see a solar farm. This will change the characteristics we love and the reason why folks like us move out in the rural area.
- ***Ecosystem and habitat impacts.*** We have migratory birds (swans, pelicans, cranes, and others). We have resident bald eagles. We have a small wetland area that is home to pheasants, turkeys and other animals. We have coyotes, deer and fox. They plan on removing an acre of timber that will impact all of this habitat. The solar panels radiate heat which will change the temperature in the surrounding area. Altering soil moisture which harms the vegetation and wildlife. How will this heat impact pollinators? Are they putting in pollinator vegetation only for them to be burned up by these panels?
- ***Potential water and soil contamination.*** Summit Ridge claims they will not use water at this site yet everywhere you read it is needed for cleaning. Over the past several years we have had dust storms so if these do not get cleaned, then they will not be efficient in creating energy. We are all on wells in this subdivision and since the panels have chemicals in them, we are concerned about these hazardous chemicals getting into our water source (Mahomet Aquafer). Or what chemicals will be going into Spring Lake.
- ***Property value decrease.*** There are studies that show that in rural areas, solar farms decrease the value of homes that are next to them.

When deciding on whether this project should be passed on to the board, ask yourself, would you want this next (literally next to) your home. No one knows what health risks there are with solar farms as they are too new. Don't put them next to a residential area. No fence, no trees will make this less harmful. We are to be good stewards and caretakers of this Earth. To use natural resources wisely and to work at restoring and sustaining the environment.

Sincerely,

Linda and Rick Hambleton