

East Valley Fire Department



Yakima County Fire District 4

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To: EFSEC

Re: High Top and Ostrea Solar Projects

Yakima County Fire District #4, East Valley Fire Department (EVFD) provides fire response to the East Valley and the rural areas surrounding it. We provide fire suppression to MM 18 on Hwy 24, as well as EMS response to MM 30. It is our operation policy when called to fires outside the MM18 area that we respond when called, report on the scene, and provide fire suppression, only if we can make a difference in the situation as an initial response in order to control spread or contain the event. We support our mutual aid partners that have contractual arrangements in the "no man's land" areas, and will do what we can to assist the citizens in that part of the County outside our District boundaries.

The EVFD does not take a stand on whether the proposed High Top and Ostrea solar farms should or should not be allowed to be built. As with any construction in a wildland area, there is inherent risk of fire due to the surrounding ground cover and topography. That is uncontrollable. We do believe that the proposed construction of such a large project in an unprotected area of the county should at minimum be required to have contractual fire suppression service in the event of a fire at the site, or one that overruns the area in a wildfire, as well as other construction details to assist in the event of a fire or emergency both during construction, and when the project is completed.

Construction of the facility should include access to all sides of the facility through gates large enough to allow access of firefighting equipment. Roadways need to be constructed wide enough to allow for equipment to pass comfortably through the panel array and make turns at the end or intersections, as well as allow for any needed operations near the suppression equipment. Vegetation management must be established and maintained both inside the perimeter fence of the facility as well as having a 30-foot buffer around the outside of the facility fence with the same vegetation management. The perimeter fencing must be kept free of blown-in weeds and debris for fire protection of the facility. If a water source is located on the property, it would have the ability to be accessed by the fire department, if necessary, to fill suppression equipment. All disconnect equipment must be clearly marked for responders. All battery storage facilities must have an appropriate fire suppression system for the hazards presented. Pre-incident planning will be needed on an annual basis at the sites in order to keep responders up to date on the facility.

The EVFD will entertain entering in to a fire suppression contract with the owners/operators of the solar farm(s) if construction is forthcoming. We also would be willing to be a resource during construction to ensure our equipment and manpower can function effectively in case of an emergency.



Dale E. Hille

Fire Chief

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