

From: [PSC Public Comment](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: No. 2024-000129 EKPC Solar
Date: Tuesday, August 13, 2024 10:45:00 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Case No. 2024-00129

Thank you for your comments on the application of East Kentucky Power Cooperative, Inc. Your comments in the above-referenced matter have been received and will be placed into the case file for the Commission's consideration. Please cite the case number in this matter, 2024-00129, in any further correspondence. The documents in this case are available at [View Case Filings for: 2024-00129 \(ky.gov\)](#).

Thank you for your interest in this matter.

From: Erin McGuire [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 8, 2024 3:08 PM
To: PSC Public Comment <PSC.Comment@ky.gov>
Subject: Re: No. 2024-000129 EKPC Solar

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Good afternoon,

On behalf of our Executive Director and our Board Chairman, I am submitting to you our organization's official comments on the solar project proposed by East Kentucky Power Cooperative (EKPC) in Fayette County. Our letter is attached to this email. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Erin McGuire-Thompson, Operations Manager
Bluegrass Land Conservancy

Phone: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
450 Old Vine Street, Suite 200, Lexington, KY 40507



BLUEGRASS LAND CONSERVANCY

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August 8, 2024

Via Email

Kentucky Public Service Commission
P.O. Box 615
211 Sower Blvd.
Frankfort, KY 40602-0615

Re: No. 2024-000129

Dear Public Service Commission Members:

We are writing on behalf of the Bluegrass Land Conservancy to provide our organization's official comments on the solar project proposed by East Kentucky Power Cooperative (EKPC) in Fayette County.

The Bluegrass Land Conservancy (BLC) was established in 1995 and is a community supported non-profit, accredited land trust working to conserve irreplaceable farmland in the Bluegrass Region. BLC currently holds 165 easements in 19 Kentucky counties, conserving over 33,000 acres of farmland on more than 160 farms across the Bluegrass region. These conserved lands include over 27,000 acres of prime farmland soils and soils of statewide importance. In Fayette County, BLC holds 17 donated conservation easements conserving nearly 2,400 acres of productive farmland.

The EKPC proposal would establish a utility scale ground mounted industrial solar facility on 387 acres within the Rural Service Area of Fayette County, setting a dangerous land use precedent that would adversely impact farms throughout the county by allowing an industrial use within an agricultural zone. Lexington Fayette County has a long history of protecting rural land for agricultural use dating back at least as early as 1958 when Lexington adopted the first urban service boundary in the United States. The community wide commitment to conserve rural land for agricultural use has continued through numerous subsequent comprehensive land use plans, ordinances and programs. The Bluegrass Land Conservancy has worked with the Lexington Fayette County government for decades to conserve farmland in Fayette County by helping establish and implement the Fayette County Purchase of Development Rights program which to date has conserved over 32,000 acres of Fayette County farmland for agricultural use.

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Permitting industrial solar facilities in the Rural Service Area will hinder ongoing efforts by the Bluegrass Land Conservancy and the Fayette County Purchase of Development Rights program to conserve additional Fayette County farmland.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 99.6% of the land within the proposed site is prime farmland or farmland of statewide importance. These high quality soils are an irreplaceable finite natural resource and should be reserved for agricultural use.

We support solar energy; however, we believe that solar energy installations should be located on rooftops, parking lots, brownfields, or reclaimed coal fields and should not be located on prime farmland or farmland of statewide significance. Fayette County farmland is an internationally recognized asset and is the factory floor of our signature agricultural and equine industries.

The rural landscape of Fayette County farmland draws tourists from across the world and is the primary draw for growing agritourism in our region. The proposed EKPC site would be located in eastern Fayette County along Winchester Road which is a Kentucky designated scenic byway and one of the major transportation corridors in our region. The proposed site abuts the Upper Reaches of Boone Creek, a federally designated National Register of Historic Places listed rural historic district. The unique rural cultural landscape of Fayette County should not be marred by industrial solar facilities that diminish the scenic quality of our historic Bluegrass region.

For the reasons outlined above, we urge you to reject the proposed solar proposal of East Kentucky Power Cooperative. Thank you for your consideration and your service on the Public Service Commission.

Sincerely,

Jessie Hancock
Executive Director

Margaret M. Graves
Chairman



Founded in 1995, Bluegrass Land Conservancy is a community-supported, nonprofit, accredited land trust working to protect land in the Bluegrass Region of Kentucky through permanent conservation easements. We seek to ensure a future where the region's distinctive soils, cultural heritage, scenic vistas, natural resources, and farms are preserved for future generations. Thanks to increasing community support, the Conservancy has permanently protected over 32,000 acres.

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