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**From:** James Copeland <jcopeland@deathvalleyschools.org>

**Sent:** Tuesday, July 15, 2025 12:51 PM

**To:** Cynthia Draper <cdraper@inyocounty.us>

**Subject:** Solar Project follow up

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Cynthia -

Following find some thoughts regarding Charleston View and issues which might be addressed as the solar project moves forward -

Death Valley Unified School District does, and has, provided K-12 education to those students residing in Charleston View. What we are seeing is an increase in enrollment from families who have relocated to Charleston View. All students are transported via school bus to our high school and elementary campuses in Shoshone. We do want to share that increased construction and maintenance traffic on Old Spanish Trail will only increase the wear and tear on what is already a sub standard highway. Our hope would be that some consideration be given to highway improvements to include turnouts for bus stops as well as a highway that would comply with California state highway guidelines as to width, etc.

At present, the lack of viable emergency services for the entire of eastern Inyo County are, without a doubt, the biggest concern that our school district faces. Should we call 911 it is doubtful that there will be a response, generally not one with qualified personnel to fight fire or tackle medical aide calls. I think about this every day with hopes that some viable solution might be available. SIFPD exists in name only - not comforting for those of us responsible for young lives and those of employees.

As a result I propose the following as a partnership with our communities and the developer of this new solar project. With the transportation of lithium batteries over our roads and the siting of lithium ion batteries on the project sit the following would do a lot to allay fears and support the viability of this project. In short, DVUSD recommends that the developer financially support, on an ongoing basis, emergency services for Charleston View as well as Old Spanish Trail.

I want to be clear in stating that these monies would go to a responsible emergency services provider, in this case either CAL FIRE or Bureau of Land Management - Thus assuring that oversight and protocols would guarantee that everyone falling under this umbrella would be served by qualified and drug free personnel.

This issue further leads to our suggestion that the developer fund five full time emergency services positions staffed by trained firefighter/paramedics. While this would be expensive, the cost would pale if a fire, medical or lithium ion event cost lives. Needless to say, serious legal issues would arise if it were determined that there were no emergency services supporting this project.

Though it might be suggested that this proposal falls under the Southern Inyo Fire Protection District, it must be made clear that time and technology simply mandate a more serious effort to save lives and property. That coupled with a lack of qualified leadership guiding current SIFPD suggest that this project needs to reach beyond our local borders to ensure the safety and security of the surrounding community. Hence, the suggestion of a BLM or CAL FIRE presence supporting our communities as well as the project staff and properties.

As to support for the Charleston View Community the school district would, without hesitation, support a road improvement effort covering some of the more traveled roads in Charleston View. This is not to suggest paved roads but, rather, some efforts including a road grader to help smooth some of those roads along with a road brush to help ensure that emergency service, school buses and residents could more easily access properties off Old Spanish Trail (I will be forwarding a map of the roads our buses traverse along with the names of the roads with the most traffic).

Thanks - anything else let me know

Jim

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**Jim Copeland**

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