



MEMORANDUM

To: Elbert County Planning Commission
From: Jennifer Jones, AICP, Community & Development Services Director
Date: August 18, 2026
Re: Solar & Battery Energy Storage Systems Regulations

CDS and Legal staff have had several work sessions with the Board of County Commissioners regarding solar and battery energy storage systems (BESS) regulations. This memo outlines proposed regulations for consideration by the Planning Commission. These regulations will be noticed in the newspaper, as required per ECZR Art. II E, prior to consideration by the Board of County Commissioners.

Redline Additions/Revisions

ZONING REGULATIONS

ECZR Art. V.D.

- Revise land use categories in the land use table to include BESS; separate solar and wind
- Modify allowable zoning districts
- Indicate supplemental standards are applicable

Land Use Table Redlines:

		Agricultural			Residential Agriculture			Residential			Non-Residential			Supplemental Stds. See Article V.E.
Utilities	Solar or Wind Farm, with or without Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)	S	S								S			X
	Utilities, Overhead	S												
	Utility Service Facility, Major	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	X
	Utility Service Facility, Minor	P	P	P	P	P	S	S	S			P		
	Wind Farm, with or without Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)	S												X
	Wind Generator	P	S									S		x

ECZR Art. V.E.

- Insert *Solar Farm, with or without Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)* alphabetically between *Shooting Gallery, Private* and *Storage and Distribution*; adjust all numbering accordingly

Draft Supplemental Standards Text:

Solar Farm, with or without Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)

(a) Required Setbacks

<i>Required Setbacks</i>	<i>Solar Panels</i>	<i>BESS</i>
<i>Residential Structure</i>	<i>500-ft</i>	<i>1,000-ft</i>
<i>Non-Residential Structure Intended for Human Occupancy (such as an office)</i>	<i>500-ft</i>	<i>1,000-ft</i>
<i>Non-Residential Structure NOT Intended for Human Occupancy (such as a barn or shed)</i>	<i>50-ft</i>	<i>350-ft</i>
<i>Public Road</i>	<i>500-ft</i>	<i>1,000-ft</i>
<i>Private Road</i>	<i>350-ft</i>	<i>1,000-ft</i>

(b) Battery Energy Storage System units shall be located internal to the site and should not be located at the perimeter of the site.

(c) Battery Energy Storage System units shall be spaced a minimum of ten-feet apart.

(d) A defensible space buffer of least 50-ft in width shall be maintained around the outer boundary of the site to main a safety zone. The buffer may be located within the required setback.

- *Modify Wind Farm. Reserved.*

Draft Supplemental Standards Text:

Wind Farm, with or without Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)

(a) Required Setbacks for Battery Energy Storage Systems associated with wind farm.

<i>Required Setbacks</i>	<i>BESS</i>
<i>Residential Structure</i>	<i>1,000-ft</i>
<i>Non-Residential Structure Intended for Human Occupancy (such as an office)</i>	<i>1,000-ft</i>
<i>Non-Residential Structure NOT Intended for Human Occupancy (such as a barn or shed)</i>	<i>350-ft</i>
<i>Public Road</i>	<i>1,000-ft</i>
<i>Private Road</i>	<i>1,000-ft</i>

(b) Battery Energy Storage System units shall be located internal to the site and should not be located at the perimeter of the site.

(c) Battery Energy Storage System units shall be spaced a minimum of ten-feet apart.

(d) A defensible space buffer of least 50-ft in width shall be maintained around the outer boundary of the site to main a safety zone. The buffer may be located within any required setback.

ECZR Appendix A.

- Insert additional definitions needed for solar and Battery Energy Storage Systems
- Adjust Appendix A alphabetically as necessary

Draft Definitions:

Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS): A rechargeable energy storage system consisting of batteries, battery chargers, controls, power conditioning systems and associated electrical equipment designed to provide electrical power to a building or to provide electrical grid-related services. Battery energy storage systems designed and operated for a single residential household shall not be included in the definition.

Defensible Space Buffer: A managed zone of cleared or thinned vegetation and combustible materials established around a site or structure.

Solar Farm: An electricity generating facility consisting of one or more solar panels under common ownership or operating control, and includes substations, cables/wire and other buildings accessory to the facility, whose main purpose is to supply electricity to the utility grid and/or off-site customers.