

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HINSDALE COUNTY, COLORADO**

**RESOLUTION NO. 11
SERIES 2023**

**A RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE COLORADO
DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL AFFAIRS FOR ASSESSMENT OF SOLAR ARRAY**

WHEREAS, Hinsdale County recognizes the need to assess the decommissioned solar array at the Hill 71 Communications Site in order to potentially use the array to offset the electrical costs of the communications site and to act as additional power backup;

WHEREAS, Hinsdale County recognizes the need to provide essential communication needs for state, regional and local emergency and law enforcement operations, in addition to providing availability for internet service to residents of Hinsdale County and the Town of Lake City, as well as visitors to the local area; and

WHEREAS, Hinsdale County has identified the ability to allocate \$10,000 for the match of an Administrative Planning Grant with a \$20,000 grant request from the Department of Local Affairs;

WHEREAS, Hinsdale County anticipates that completion of the assessment of the solar array within two months, and

WHEREAS, Hinsdale County is not able to fund this assessment in full without the assistance from the Department of Local Affairs; and

WHEREAS, Hinsdale County is interested in seeking grant funds from the Department of Local Affairs to help complete the assessment of the solar array and has adequate funds to meet the necessary match requirements of the grant.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Hinsdale County, Colorado, that the County Administrator be authorized to submit a letter of application to the Department of Local Affairs on behalf of Hinsdale County requesting financial assistance for assessment of the solar array located at the county's Hill 71 Communications Site.

INTRODUCED by Commissioner Robert Hurd, seconded by Commissioner Kristine Borchers, and passed this 6th day of September, 2023.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF HINSDALE COUNTY, COLORADO**

By:  _____
Greg Levine, Chair

ATTEST:

 _____
Joan Roberts, County Clerk & Recorder





311 N. Henson St. Lake City, Colorado 81235 970-944-2225 www.hinsdalecountycolorado.us

September 6, 2023

Dana P. Hlavac
Colorado Department of Local Affairs
Regional Manager – North West
222 South 6th Street, Room 409
Grand Junction, CO 81501

Re: Administrative Grant Request – Hinsdale County Solar Array Assessment

Dear Mr. Hlavac

Hinsdale County has identified the need to re-energize a solar array that was previously used to power the County's communications site. This requires an assessment of the solar array for which the county has received a cost estimate of \$20,000. The county is submitting this Administrative Grant Request to help fund this assessment.

Hinsdale County maintains a communication site on land leased from the Bureau of Land Management above the Town of Lake City. The site contains a tower and equipment for state, regional and local emergency communications as well as an additional tower and equipment for private businesses supplying internet service to the Town of Lake City and surrounding area.

The first tower on Hill 71 was installed in 1984 for Hinsdale County communication needs. At that time six small solar panels were used to power the small site. In 2009, the Hill 71 site was upgraded with an additional tower and equipment for state emergency communications. At that same time, the county received funding from Homeland Security and Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) to install a 360-panel solar array to power the site.

In 2015 the county received a DOLA grant to install hard-wired power to the Hill 71 site. At that time use of the solar array was abandoned and future uses were discussed but not immediately implemented. For the last two years, Hinsdale County has been exploring ways to re-purpose the solar array where it sits as opposed to dismantling and disposing of the large structure. The county has been in discussions with Coldharbour Institute and Equitable Solar Solutions, along with Gunnison County Electric to explore options to re-energize the site.

Following these discussions, the County Commissioners made the decision to take on the project themselves to see if it is possible to re-energize the solar array. The County will use the solar power to offset the electrical costs of the communications site and to act as a further electrical backup for the equipment. The first step in this process will be a necessary assessment of each of the panels along with all associated equipment. Depending on the outcome of the array assessment, the County will discuss funding options to re-energize the array.



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Hinsdale County has a long history of partnering with DOLA to complete a wide variety of projects that have benefitted the Hinsdale County community. These projects include assistance on the hard-wired electric power to Hill 71, evaluation of sites for a new communication facility for the underserved southern end of Hinsdale County, and purchase of emergency flood warning equipment. Specifically, Hinsdale County applied for and received an Administration Grant for installation of a new GIS mapping system, an Asset Inventory project, and most recently, funds toward design of a new County Operations Building.

Scope:

The 360-panel solar array is located above the Town of Lake City at Hinsdale County's Hill 71 site. The site is the location of towers and equipment for state, regional and local emergency, and law enforcement communication needs, in addition to providing space for private businesses providing internet service to the Town and surrounding areas. The Administrative Grant will be used to fund the \$20,000 cost to assess each of the panels in the array along with all associated equipment. The County has received a cost estimate from High Mountain Solutions for the assessment.

Project Budget and Timeline:

Hinsdale County has \$10,000 in its Hill 71 fund to match the Administrative Grant of \$20,000. The grant and match will be used to fund the assessment of the solar array. The assessment will be completed by the end of 2023.

Financial Need:

Hinsdale County is a small, rural county in Western Colorado with 96 percent public land and a population of approximately 900 people. With a 4% property tax based, the county works with a small budget and limited financial resources. The county's only industry is seasonal tourism, with a short time for businesses to operate. The county seeks grant funding for important projects, which includes the ongoing maintenance, support and upgrade to essential communications at the county's Hill 71 site.

Project Urgency and Readiness to Begin Work:

Hinsdale County has been exploring ways to re-energize the solar array at the Hill 71 site for several years in order to save on tax dollars that are used to power the site. The cost of electric power to the site would be offset by solar energy produced by the site. In addition, the solar power could provide additional back up power to the site in emergency situations including electrical power outages. The County is ready to move forward with the assessment of the solar panels immediately.



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The Energy and Mineral Impact:

Because this is an Energy Impact grant, we have contacted mining operators in Hinsdale County to inform them of this application. Hinsdale County – like many of the rural Colorado counties – was founded on the discovery of and patenting of discovered valuable veins of minerals. The Ute Ulay is known as the “Mine that Made Lake City.” Since that 1874 date, the booms and busts of Hinsdale County and the Town of Lake City are well known and documented.

Attached is Resolution 11, Series 2023, adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on September 6, 2023, authorizing this application, and confirming the \$10,000 match is secured.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Greg Levine", is written over a horizontal line.

Greg Levine, Chair
Hinsdale County Board of Commissioners