



May 11, 2026

Cherokee County Board of Commissioners
110 W. Maple St.
Columbus, KS 66725

Dear Commissioners Moates, Garner and Frazier,

At its May 4, 2026 meeting, the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners requested a meeting with representatives of Rainbow Springs Solar. We welcome the opportunity to discuss the Rainbow Springs Solar project and address any questions. Unfortunately, we are unable to attend an in-person meeting on May 11, but we will attend a meeting with the Commission as soon as possible. We hope this letter addresses some of your questions and provides guidance for a productive discussion.

It's important to provide context for this critical infrastructure project. Due to rising electricity demand (nationally and locally), local energy providers recognize that there is a significant need for new generation facilities, like Rainbow Springs solar. With continued increases in energy demand comes improved project economics. We would be happy to discuss this with the Commission.

Tax Revenue and Economic Development

There has been significant discussion about the taxes paid by solar projects. To be clear, Rainbow Springs Solar is not requesting any local tax incentives from Cherokee County. On the contrary, on August 18, 2025, we proposed a voluntary Contribution Agreement with the county under which we would pay more than \$5,000,000 during the first 10 years of project operation.¹ At that time, we also proposed a Development Agreement, a Road Use Agreement, and a Decommissioning Agreement, all of which require Rainbow Springs Solar to pay Cherokee County for various activities associated with building, operating, and, at the end of the project's effective life, removing the project. These agreements have also been publicly shared through our social media channels and clearly outlined on our website. You can find this information included as well as at <https://www.rainbowspringsolar.com/our-legal-commitment-to-chokeee-county-property-rights-protections-and-economic-benefits>.

¹ This is during the 10 year property tax exemption period provided by the State of Kansas, through K.S.A. 79-201(Eleventh), effective July 1, 2015.

An independent analysis by Wichita State University estimates that in the second ten years of operation, the project will pay more than \$3,000,000 per year in property taxes. The Kansas Department of Revenue has also issued clear guidance to counties on assessing and valuing solar energy systems for property tax purposes, which we have included with this letter.

Taken together, the voluntary commitment of at least \$5,000,000 in community contribution and the estimated \$33,000,000 in taxes will result in Rainbow Springs Solar paying \$38,000,000 over the first 20 years. As the project will operate for 30 years, the above underestimate the total economic benefits to the county.

Land Impacts and Decommissioning

We also know there has been misinformation and, in some cases, inaccurate statements about solar projects and their impact on the land. Land is a precious resource, and our long-term success depends on protecting it. That is why we are offering both a development agreement and a decommissioning agreement. These legally binding contracts serve as project-specific "self-zoning": they clearly set standards for construction and operations and legally obligate Rainbow Springs Solar to remove equipment at the end of the project and return the land to its prior condition. These agreements give the County direct, enforceable tools tailored to this project—tools that do not require imposing permanent countywide zoning on every landowner.

Working with our Neighbors

We recognize that not every resident supports solar energy. Our experience so far suggests that most residents support landowners' right to make voluntary decisions about their property. Every participating landowner in Rainbow Springs Solar has freely chosen to enter into an agreement because they believe it is in the best interest of their family and their land. We have also worked diligently to sign good neighbor agreements with nearby residents and landowners, and we will continue to do so.

County-wide Zoning and Taxes

In December of 2024, this Board started a process to consider countywide zoning. This is a misguided effort that will restrict property owners' rights to use their land as they choose and will absolutely ensure future business development in the County will be significantly reduced.

Because questions have been raised about whether residents want countywide zoning, Clearway commissioned a high-quality, countywide public opinion survey from the nationally recognized research firm Tunnl. The survey found that 61% of Cherokee County residents oppose countywide zoning (42% strongly), while just 18% support it. When asked in more detail, 60% said new zoning regulations would infringe on their property rights by imposing costs and restrictions, compared with 19% who said zoning is needed

to keep certain industries out. In other words, a majority of your constituents are opposed to zoning. We've included the Tunnl polling memo with this letter.

Rather than a blanket, one-size-fits-all approach, we believe there is a better path forward: a negotiated set of agreements between the County and Rainbow Springs Solar that address your specific concerns while allowing landowners and the county to benefit from this project.

Regarding taxes, we understand that the county government faces constant pressure, which forces difficult decisions. The cost of living in Cherokee County has risen significantly in recent years, largely due to property tax increases. Economic development projects, such as Rainbow Springs Solar, will provide needed revenue for the county, easing the burden on its citizens. We've already outlined how our voluntary support and estimated tax payments can ease this burden.

On August 23, 2025, this board passed a resolution stating its intent to levy a property tax rate above the revenue-neutral rate of 30.605 mills. The county's proposed total tax rate for 2026 is 37.939 mills, representing an increase of approximately 24 percent over the revenue-neutral rate.

Looking further back, per-capita property and personal taxes in Cherokee County have risen notably over the past several years. After dipping slightly in 2021, taxes increased steadily through 2024. In 2020, per-capita property taxes totaled \$1,074. That figure declined to \$1,022 in 2021, then rose to \$1,135 in 2022, \$1,289 in 2023, and \$1,325 in 2024. Overall, per-capita property taxes increased by approximately 24 percent between 2020 and 2024, reflecting a sustained upward trend in the local tax burden on residents.

We believe that by working together, leveraging the outlined benefits, securing strong, enforceable agreements, and acknowledging the majority opinion in Cherokee County, we can advance this vital energy and economic development project. We look forward to meeting with you to discuss these issues and to develop a framework that achieves the Board's goals while respecting the will of Cherokee County residents and landowners' rights.

Sincerely,
Josh Framel
Project Developer
Rainbow Springs Solar / Clearway Energy