

To: Planning, Building, Zoning and Environment Committee

Date: June 3, 2026

Subject: Proposed Amendments on Commercial Solar, Wind & Energy Storage Systems

Background:

The Illinois Clean and Reliable Grid Affordability (CRGA) Act, (Public Act 104-0458), passed on January 8, 2026, expands and modifies existing statutory limits on county regulations for commercial solar and wind facilities, and introduces new statutory limits on county regulation of energy storage systems. Illinois counties are required to adopt corresponding regulations. Staff has begun drafting text amendments to provide a revised set of use standards for commercial solar and wind facilities, and a new set of use standards for energy storage systems to comply with the Public Act 104-0458, and seeks Board approval of a resolution directing the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) to conduct a public hearing on such amendments when completed.

Highlights of Regulatory Components:

- The proposed amendments to commercial solar and wind facilities include updating existing use standards for Commercial Solar Energy Systems (Section 151.112(Y) of the Lake County Code of Ordinances (LCC) and for Wind Energy Systems (Section 115.112(EEE) of the LCC) including, but not limited to, specifying certain energy storage systems as an accessory use “supporting facilities,” authorizing the ZBA to impose a fence setback, and modifying regulations related to vegetative screening.
- The proposed amendments for energy storage systems include creation of uniform county standards for large energy storage systems (ESS) with over 1,000 kW (1 MW) capacity as a principal use, including public hearing requirements, and establishing general setback requirements and sound limitations, among various other standards.

Next Steps:

Staff seeks Planning, Building, Zoning and Environment (PBZE) Committee action on the ZBA resolution, following which the resolution will proceed to the County Board for adoption.