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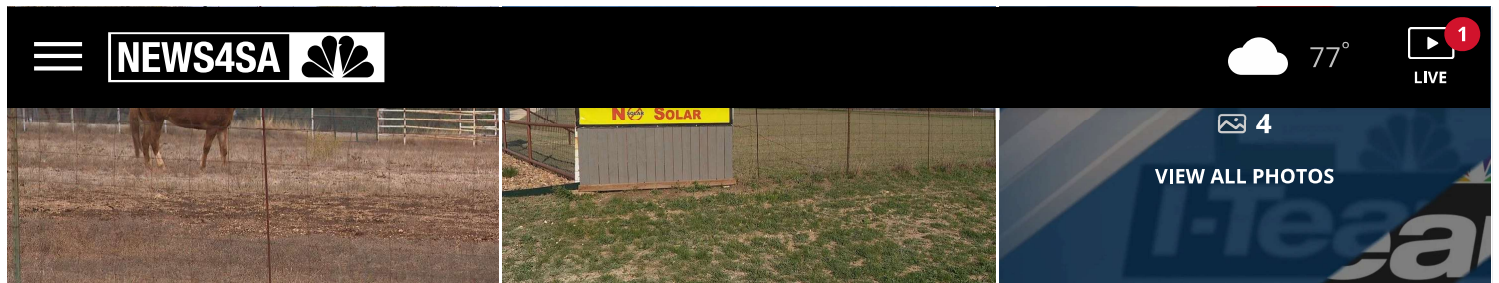
Company building Bandera solar farm files Chapter 11 bankruptcy

by Jaie Avila / News 4 San Antonio

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Company building Bandera solar farm files Chapter 11 bankruptcy (SBG San Antonio)



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BANDERA, TX - A new development in the battle over a huge solar farm in Bandera. The company behind the project has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

A North Carolina company called Pine Gate Renewables is in the process of selling the solar farm it built here in Bandera along with more than 100 other solar projects it has around the country. It says they will all remain in operation during the process.

Nearby property owners have opposed the solar project ever since work began in early 2024, calling it an eyesore that would spoil the natural beauty of the Hill Country and create more runoff coming on to their properties.

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"First of all, I don't think it's good for the environment, I don't think it's what the neighbors moved out here for," said Carrie Crumrine, who lives near the solar farm.

A lawsuit filed by neighbors briefly forced Pine Gate to stop work and address environmental concerns, but ultimately the half-million solar panels were put in place just as Pine Gate filed bankruptcy.

"It's not even truly up and going and they've already filed bankruptcy. They've not been honest from the beginning, there was going to be low visual impact," Crumrine said.

Residents say Pine Gate never followed through on promises the panels would be largely concealed by fencing and landscaping.

They worry the new owner won't abide by a settlement agreement that allowed neighbors to lodge complaints if runoff damaged their property or wildlife.

The company did not respond to our request for information on the bankruptcy.

"I think we're going to see this facility purchased, have a new owner and it will continue to operate," said Ed Hirs, an energy economist with the University of Houston.

Hirs says there continues to be high demand for solar power.

"The solar business in Texas right now is booming. Keep in mind that without the solar farms that have joined the grid over the past five or six years the Texas economy would be dead in the water," Hirs said.


The Bandera Electric Cooperative, which provides power to the area, did build a transmission substation to handle the solar farm's output, but the cooperative tells the News 4 I-Team Pine Gate already paid more than \$10 million for that construction and cooperative customers are not out any money.

On its restructuring website, Pine Gate Renewables says bankruptcy will "result in transitioning ownership of its solar and energy storage project fleet while preserving jobs and maximizing value".



This solar farm is scheduled to go online at the end of this month. Pine Gate Renewables says it will produce enough energy for 22,800 homes.

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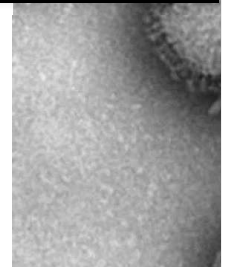
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