



**Marion County
Board of County Commissioners**

McPherson Governmental Complex

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District 1 – Craig Curry, Commissioner
District 2 – Kathy Bryant, Chairman
District 3 – Matt McClain, Commissioner
District 4 – Carl Zalak III, Vice-Chair
District 5 – Michelle Stone, Commissioner

January 21, 2025

Seminole Electric Cooperative, Inc.
330 South US Highway 301
Sumterville, FL 33585

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter of support for the Dunnellon Solar project in Marion County, Florida.

Marion County is the home to one of the longest sections of the Heart of Florida Trail (HOF), a designated Statewide Regional Trail system, which spans over 250 miles across our region. As plans for the completion of this section of the HOF have evolved over the years, the proposed solar farm project has potential to satisfy a long-term need: finalizing the trail connection between Pruitt Trailhead to the east and the Bridges Road Trailhead to the west through a dedicated trail easement.

Marion County has worked with the City of Dunnellon to secure a potential easement for the trail with the solar farm developer. Once this trail is constructed, combined with approximately 80 miles of existing paved trails in southwest Marion County and northeast Citrus County, a long existing gap in the statewide trail system will be closed.

The regional economic impact of paved trails is well-documented, with clear benefits for both local communities and the broader economy. Trails like those planned for this project can enhance transportation networks, connecting people to work, schools, and recreational areas. Specifically, paved trails offer substantial economic advantages, benefiting not only the communities where they are built but also contributing to the overall economic vitality of Florida. By closing the gap in southwest Marion County, this project will drive increased tourism, boost spending at local businesses, and improve the quality of life for residents. These improvements will help attract new visitors and businesses, further strengthening the region's economy.

Respectfully,

Kathy Bryant, Chairman

Cc: Marion County Board of County Commissioners
Mounir Bouyounes, P.E. – County Administrator
Angel Roussel, P.E. – Assistant County Administrator
Jim Couillard, PLA – Parks & Recreation Director