



ACT For Missouri
506 N Maguire Street,
Warrensburg, MO 64093
(573) 227-8772
info@act4mo.org
www.act4mo.org

Concerns About SB 213

While Senate Bill 213 (SB 213) includes several provisions designed to protect landowners and residents concerned about solar farm development in Missouri, some aspects of the bill still raise concerns. From the perspective of landowners and residents who want to safeguard their property, community, and quality of life, here are potential issues that our legislators need to watch out for, along with where they appear in the bill and why they might be worrisome.

Potential Concerns for Landowners and Residents in SB 213

1. Limited Scope of Setback Protections (*Section 67.5350*)

Details: The bill mandates that solar farms be built at least 1,000 feet from churches, schools, city/town/village limits, or private residences (*Page 2, lines 31–33*). However, this buffer only applies to these specific landmarks and doesn't explicitly cover other sensitive areas like farmland, wildlife habitats, or water sources.

Location in Bill: *Pages 1–3, Section 67.5350, subsection 3.*

Why It's Concerning: If you live on a farm or rural property without a nearby church, school, or town, a solar farm could still be built close to your land—potentially right up to your property line—disrupting your views, farming operations, or peace and quiet. The 1,000-foot rule might not protect against noise, glare from panels, or construction traffic in less populated areas. Residents might worry that this gap leaves rural landscapes vulnerable to industrial encroachment, especially if county commissions don't add stricter local rules.

2. County Commission Discretion Could Vary Widely (*Section 67.5350*)

Details: County commissions decide whether to approve, modify, or deny solar farm permits after a public meeting, but the bill doesn't set strict criteria for denial beyond the 1,000-foot setback (*Page 3, lines 47–54*). They must act within 90 days post-meeting, and permits can be adjusted to smaller boundaries within the proposed area.

Location in Bill: *Pages 1–3, Section 67.5350, subsections 4–5.*

Why It's Concerning: Your protection depends on how tough your county commission is willing to be. One county might reject a solar farm over minor concerns, while another might

rubber-stamp it despite strong resident opposition, especially if jobs or tax revenue are promised. The lack of uniform standards means uneven safeguards across Missouri—your community’s fate hinges on local politics, not a statewide guarantee. Plus, shrinking a project’s boundaries might still allow it near your home, just slightly scaled back, leaving you feeling unheard.

3. Tax Breaks Could Attract More Solar Farms (*Sections 137.124 and 153.030*)

Details: Solar farm equipment (excluding land) is taxed at just 37.5% of its original cost starting the year after construction, whether owned by a private company (*Section 137.124, Pages 5–6, lines 6–14*) or a public utility (*Section 153.030, Page 11, lines 171–181*). This applies as of January 1, 2026.

Location in Bill: *Pages 5–6, Section 137.124; Pages 6–11, Section 153.030, subsection 6(3).*

Why It’s Concerning: Lower taxes might make Missouri more appealing to solar developers, potentially flooding rural areas with projects you don’t want. While the bill ensures some tax revenue, the discount could mean less money for schools or roads compared to full taxation, straining local budgets if multiple solar farms pop up. Residents might fear this incentivizes companies to target their county, overriding community resistance with promises of economic perks that don’t fully offset the disruption.

4. Liability Insurance Lacks Specifics (*Section 67.5350*)

Details: Companies must obtain liability insurance “in an amount sufficient to cover any damages” from solar farm construction (*Page 3, lines 59–61*), but the bill doesn’t define “sufficient” or mandate coverage for long-term issues like environmental harm or property value loss.

Location in Bill: *Pages 1–3, Section 67.5350, subsection 7.*

Why It’s Concerning: If a solar farm damages your well, floods your field, or tanks your home’s value, you’re left relying on the county to enforce strong insurance terms—which they might not. Without clear minimums, companies could skimp on coverage, leaving you to fight for compensation after the fact. Landowners might worry this vague rule won’t fully protect them from construction mishaps or ongoing impacts like soil erosion or panel disposal risks.

5. Material Amendments Could Restart the Process (*Section 67.5350*)

Details: Any “material amendment” (e.g., increasing capacity, changing generation type, or expanding boundaries outside the original permit) requires a new application and public meeting (*Page 3, lines 55–57*). However, changes within the original boundaries (like adding more panels underground) don’t trigger this.

Location in Bill: *Pages 1–3, Section 67.5350, subsection 6; definition of “material amendment” on Page 1, lines 3–12.*

Why It's Concerning: A solar farm could start small to gain approval, then quietly beef up within its borders—say, by burying more equipment—without giving you another chance to object. This loophole might let companies skirt around resident input after the initial permit, growing their footprint in ways that still affect your land or views. You might feel blindsided if a “done deal” suddenly gets bigger, louder, or uglier without a fresh say.

6. Transmission Line Rules Don't Cover Solar Farms Directly (*Section 393.172*)

Details: New rules for transmission line construction on agricultural land (effective by March 31, 2026) address landowner communication and land restoration, but they only apply to lines, not solar farms themselves (*Pages 15–16, lines 1–28*).

Location in Bill: *Pages 15–16, Section 393.172.*

Why It's Concerning: If a solar farm needs new lines, your farmland gets some protection during that part—but the solar farm itself could still tear up your area with no similar safeguards. Construction traffic, panel installation, or fencing might disrupt your property or water flow without the same oversight. Rural residents should worry that this half-measure will leave them exposed to the bulk of a solar project's impact, especially if lines aren't the main issue.

7. Local Taxation Might Not Stop Big Projects (*Section 153.034*)

Details: Solar farm property is taxed locally under Chapter 137, not as part of a utility's statewide assets (*Pages 13–14, lines 42–67*), ensuring counties get revenue directly.

Location in Bill: *Pages 13–14, Section 153.034, subsection 3.*

Why It's Concerning: While local taxing sounds good, it doesn't cap how many solar farms can come in—or how big they can get. A county flush with tax cash might welcome more projects, even if residents hate the idea, prioritizing dollars over your peace. Plus, assessors might undervalue solar gear (especially with the 37.5% rule), leaving less revenue to offset the headaches of traffic, noise, or lost farmland you might face.

Overall Concerns for Landowners and Residents

What Should Worry You:

The bill's protections—like the 1,000-foot setback and public meetings—don't cover every scenario, leaving gaps where solar farms could still encroach on rural life (*Section 67.5350*). Tax breaks might draw more developers to your doorstep (*Sections 137.124, 153.030*), and vague rules on insurance or amendments could weaken your safety net (*Section 67.5350*). Transmission line rules skip the solar farms themselves (*Section 393.172*), and local control might not always favor your side (*Sections 67.5350, 153.034*).

Big Picture Risk:

SB 213 tries to balance your rights with solar growth, but it might not stop determined companies from pushing through, especially in counties eager for cash or jobs. You could end up with a patchwork of protection—strong in some spots, flimsy in others—leaving you to fight case-by-case battles to keep your land and community intact.

Conclusion

SB 213 does offer some real wins for landowners and residents, like local say-so and distance rules, but it's not airtight. If you're worried about solar farms taking over, you might find the bill's gaps—like uneven county power, tax incentives for companies, or missing safeguards for farmland—leave you exposed. It's a step toward protection, but you might still need to lean on your county commission or push for stricter local ordinances to hold the line against unwanted solar sprawl. We need additional protections for landowners and residents from the Solar Farm Developers, but they must be airtight!

We urge lawmakers to address the above-mentioned concerns and amend this legislation accordingly.