



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL

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VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

February 17, 2023

Jonathan H. Schaefer, Esq.
Robinson & Cole LLP
280 Trumbull Street
Hartford, CT 06103-3597
jschaefer@rc.com

RE: **PETITION NO. 1443A** - SR North Stonington, LLC declaratory ruling, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §4-176 and §16-50k, for the proposed construction, maintenance and operation of a 9.9-megawatt AC solar photovoltaic electric generating facility on five parcels located north and south of Providence New London Turnpike (State Route 184), west of Boombridge Road and north of Interstate 95 in North Stonington, Connecticut, and associated electrical interconnection. **Development and Management Plan – Phase II.**

Dear Attorney Schaefer:

At a public meeting of the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) held on February 16, 2023, the Council considered and approved the Partial Development and Management Plan II (Phase II D&M Plan) submitted for this facility on January 23, 2023 with the condition that SR North Stonington, LLC make reasonable efforts to avoid truck deliveries during the hours of 6:40AM-8:00AM and 2:30PM-4:00PM from September through May, or coincident with the North Stonington Public School Calendar, to accommodate school bus routes on Boombridge Road and Providence New London Turnpike.

This approval applies only to the Phase II D&M Plan submitted on January 23, 2023. Requests for any changes to the Phase II D&M Plan shall be approved by Council staff in accordance with Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies (RCSA) §16-50j-62(b).

Furthermore, the facility owner or operator is responsible for reporting requirements pursuant to RCSA §16-50j-62, including:

1. Quarterly construction progress reports;
2. Notification of completion of construction and commencement of operation; and
3. Final report.

Please be advised that deviations from the approved Phase II D&M Plan and non-compliance with the D&M Plan reporting requirements are enforceable under Connecticut General Statutes §16-50u.

Enclosed is a copy of the staff report for this Phase II D&M Plan, dated February 16, 2023.

Thank you for your attention and cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Melanie A. Bachman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Melanie A. Bachman
Executive Director

MAB/MP/laf

Enclosure: Staff Report, dated February 16, 2023

c: Service List, dated December 20, 2021



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Petition No. 1443A
SR North Stonington, LLC
Solar Facility – North Stonington
Partial Development & Management Plan II
Staff Report
February 16, 2023

Introduction

On May 13, 2022, the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) issued a Declaratory Ruling to SR North Stonington, LLC (SRNS) for the construction, maintenance, and operation of an 8.35-megawatt (MW) AC solar photovoltaic electric generating facility on four¹ contiguous parcels located generally south of Providence New London Turnpike (Route 184), west of Boombridge Road and north of Interstate 95 in North Stonington, and associated electrical interconnection.

On September 8, 2022, SRNS submitted a Partial Development and Management (D&M) Plan (Phase I) to comply with D&M Plan items (f) and (g) as required by Condition 2 of the Council's Declaratory Ruling. The Phase I submittal included site plans and documentation specific to the commencement of site clearing and grubbing to adhere to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) clearing restriction from May 1 to August 14 for state-listed bat species. The Council approved Phase I on October 28, 2022.

Construction related to Phase I commenced on or about November 16, 2022. On January 23, 2023, SRNS submitted Partial D&M Plan II (Phase II) with the remaining D&M Plan items as required by Condition 2 of the Council's Declaratory Ruling.

Pursuant to Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies §16-50j-61(d), a copy of Phase II was provided to the service list, inclusive of the Town of North Stonington, on or about January 23, 2023. No comments regarding Phase II were received.

Condition 2 of the Council's Declaratory Ruling required the following information to be included in the D&M Plan:

- a. A final site plan including, but not limited to, final facility layout, access roads, electrical interconnection including pole locations, fence design, equipment pads, stormwater management control structures, and final seed mix;**

The site consists of two separate array areas, the Western Array and the Eastern Array, which are separated by an intervening wetland corridor (Wetland E).

The Western and Eastern solar arrays will have a total of 21,100 fixed tilt bi-facial 580-Watt DC Hanwha solar panels installed at an angle of 25 degrees above the horizontal. The bottom of the panels will be typically two feet above grade, and the top of the panels will reach a height of about

¹ The original Petition 1443 had a total of five parcels, including one parcel directly north of Providence New London Turnpike. The reopened Petition, known as Petition 1443A, eliminated solar panels north of Providence New London Turnpike; thus, the total number of parcels was reduced from five to four.

8.7 feet above grade. Inter-row spacing is approximately 8.8 feet. The total area of disturbance area is approximately 34.6 acres.

Four equipment pads for the solar facility will be installed: one transformer/inverter pad in the southern portion of the Western Array area; one transformer/inverter pad in the northern portion of the Western Array area; one switchgear pad in the northern portion of the Western Array area; and one transformer/inverter pad in the western portion of the Eastern Array area.

Access to the Western Array will utilize a new 16-foot wide gravel drive (with an 18-foot wide asphalt entrance) extending from Providence New London Turnpike through the central portion of the array. Access to the Eastern Array will utilize an existing farm access route off of Boombridge Road that will be upgraded to a 16-foot wide gravel access drive. It will extend along the northern edge of the array, then turn south along the western edge of the array. Both access drives will terminate at a turnaround area.

A 7-foot chain link fence with a foot of barbed wire on top will be installed around each array area.

The electrical interconnection to the distribution system would extend underground from the equipment pads at the northern portion of the Western Array area to two new poles within the same fenced array area. The interconnection will continue overhead to an existing pole on the same side of Providence New London Turnpike.

Final site plans include stormwater management control structures including four stormwater quality basins: two in the northeastern portion of the Western Array area; one in the southwestern portion of the Western Array area; and one in the southern portion of the Eastern Array area.

Final design drawings are included in Phase II. These updated plans include a shift in the construction entrance (off of Providence New London Turnpike) approximately 30 feet to the east and modifications to the final wood fence design along the property line with 476 Providence New London Turnpike.

Post-construction, the solar array areas would be seeded with a grass mix composed of fescues, ryegrass and bluegrass.

b. Final plans for intra-connection of the Western Array Area and the Eastern Array Area that crosses Wetland E;

The electrical intra-connection between the Western Array and the Eastern Array will be an overhead crossing of Wetland E. This will avoid direct impacts to the wetland. Temporary impacts will include the installation of wood construction matting across the wetland and the clearing of trees within and adjacent to the wetland to install the overhead line.

Underground conduit from the Eastern Array would transition to an overhead line to cross the wetland using three wood poles within an approximately 490-foot long, 50-foot wide corridor. All three poles would be located in upland areas with the closest approximately 27 feet from the wetland. The line would transition to underground at the Western Array area, extending to equipment pads near Providence New London Turnpike.

- c. Consultation with Eversource to minimize the visibility of the electrical interconnection and submission of final design plans;**

Phase II includes correspondence between SRNS and Eversource regarding minimizing the visibility of the electrical interconnection. While pole heights would remain at approximately 50 feet tall, the quantity of new on-site poles for the electrical interconnection has been reduced from three to two. These poles will be located within the northern limits of the Western Array area. The final design plans on Sheet G-101 include the final electrical interconnection route.

- d. Final plans for an aesthetic fence design for visual screening at 454 and 476 Providence New London Turnpike;**

Phase II includes final plans for an aesthetic fence design for visual screening at 454 and 476 Providence New London Turnpike. Specifically, SRNS will install privacy slats on the northeastern portion of its chain link fence for the Western Array area to provide visual screening for 454 Providence New London Turnpike. A wooden fence will be installed between the Eastern Array area fence and the northern property line as well as dogwood trees to provide additional screening from 476 Providence New London Turnpike.

- e. A final sheep grazing plan that does not include rotational grazing in proximity to any dog kennel(s);**

This information will be provided in Partial D&M Plan Phase III.

- f. Erosion and sedimentation control plan consistent with the 2002 Connecticut Guidelines for Erosion and Sedimentation Control including, but not limited to, temporary sediment basin details, site stabilization seeding/growing season details prior to the installation of the post driving/racking system, site stabilization measures during construction, inspection and reporting protocols, methods for periodic cleaning of temporary sediment traps and swales during construction, and final cleaning of stormwater basins upon site stabilization;**

E&S Control Plans and site stabilization measures were provided in Phase I.

Phase II Sheet C00-2 includes procedures for periodic cleaning of temporary sediment traps. Procedures include, but are not limited to, inspections and cleaning of a basin when sediment accumulates to half the capacity of the basin. Once construction is complete, and the site has achieved 80 percent stabilization, sediment traps would either be converted to permanent basins or removed depending on location, in accordance with the DEEP issued General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater and Dewatering Wastewaters from Construction Activities.

- g. Site construction detail/phasing plan including, but not limited to, construction laydown area, site clearing/grubbing, site grading, excess earth material disposal locations, site stabilization seeding/growing season details, soil stockpile locations, and a Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure Plan that is protective of groundwater resources;**

This information was provided in Phase I.

- h. Final structural design for the solar module racking system stamped by a Professional Engineer duly licensed in the State of Connecticut; and**

Phase II includes the final structural design drawings for the racking system that are signed and stamped by a Professional Engineer licensed in Connecticut.

i. Construction traffic control plan developed in consultation with the Town and State Department of Transportation, as applicable.

Phase II includes a Traffic Management Plan that was developed in consultation with the Town and the Connecticut Department of Transportation. Construction is not anticipated to require lane closures or flagmen/police officers to direct traffic. The Town requests that truck deliveries avoid the hours of 6:40AM-8:00AM and 2:30PM-4:00PM from September through May to accommodate school bus routes on Boombridge Road and Providence New London Turnpike.

Conclusion

Phase II is consistent with the Council's Declaratory Ruling dated May 13, 2022.

If approved, staff recommends the following condition:

1. SRNS shall make reasonable efforts to avoid truck deliveries during the hours of 6:40AM-8:00AM and 2:30PM-4:00PM from September through May to accommodate school bus routes on Boombridge Road and Providence New London Turnpike.