

PPRP Fact Sheet – Egypt Road Solar Project, Dorchester County

PSC Case Number 9434

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Last Updated 28 February 2017

Project overview:

Egypt Road Solar, LLC (a subsidiary of Urban Grid) has filed for a CPCN to construct and operate a 45.9 MW solar array in Dorchester County (Figure 1). The Project will occupy 289.3 acres of a 319.4 acre Property. Project components include:

- 172,000 photovoltaic (PV) modules and a racking system
- DC to AC power inverters
- Medium voltage transformers
- Overhead generation interconnection

Site Description

The Project will be located on two parcels (Tax Map 41 Parcel 2 and Parcel 128) both held by the same landowner. The Project site is zoned Residential (R-1) and is designated a Priority Funding Area (PFA). It is currently used for agricultural purposes; although no portion of the Project is considered prime farmland. The Applicant has met with the City of Cambridge to discuss a change in zoning for the site. Adjacent land uses include: a DNR experimental reforestation area (Little Blackwater Forest Carbon Sequestration Pilot Project), DNR Wetlands, Forest and Waterway Restoration Project, Snows Turn Park Dorchester County park land, an elementary school, residences, and agriculture.

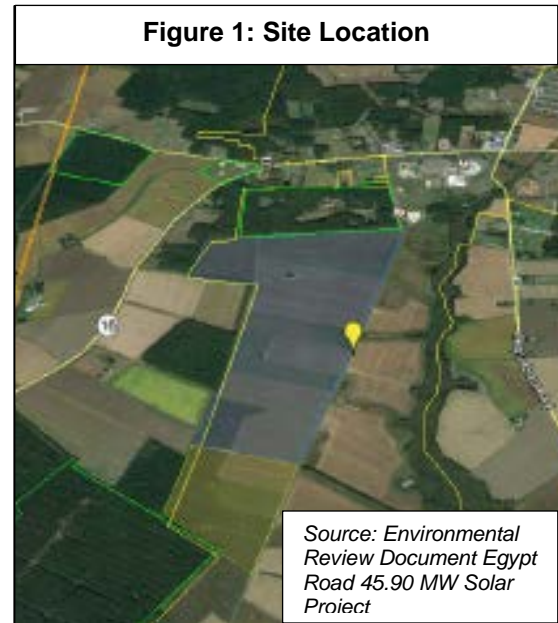
Potential Impacts

Streams and Wetlands

- The Project is located in the Little Blackwater River watershed and near the Little Maple Dam Branch.
- The Critical Area boundary extends onto the northeast corner of the Property. No construction activities are planned for this area.
- There are wetlands and jurisdictional waterways on the Property, as well as agricultural ditches, some of which interconnect with the wetlands. The Applicant plans to use previous wetland delineations to avoid wetlands and their 25-foot buffers during construction of the Project.
- Based on Project plans provided in the ERD, the perimeter road, fencing, cables, and certain transformers will cross jurisdictional wetlands and certain non-jurisdictional wetlands will be filled. PPRP has requested additional information from the Applicant including:
 - The mapped locations of: wetland areas and buffers, other drainage features on the Property, and areas where filling of wetlands or drainage features are proposed;
 - Potential impacts of filling of drainages to the hydrology of the site and flow in the Little Maple Dam Branch and Little Blackwater River;
 - Proposed method to construct access roads that will cross wetlands; and
 - Whether cables, fencing, or other features will be installed in wetlands or waterways, and if so, how will their impacts be minimized.

Post-Construction Ground Cover

- Following construction, the Project will be planted with low cover grasses. The Applicant is proposing to incorporate a wild flower seed mixture with the selected grasses to support a healthy habitat for honey bees and other pollinators.
- PPRP has requested additional information from the Applicant regarding:
 - The species selected for the vegetative cover;
 - The extent of proposed pollinator habitat;
 - Whether mowing will be required, anticipated frequency of mowing, and whether mowing will occur during the nesting season for ground-nesting birds (May through August); and
 - Whether an alternative vegetation management system that requires little to no mowing has been considered.



Ground Disturbances

- Filling of some agricultural ditches and non-jurisdictional wetlands is proposed.
- Access roads are proposed, including one circling the perimeter of the Project, resulting in about 7 acres of compacted or impervious surface.
- Other impervious areas will include: paving at the Project entrance, piles to support the solar array, inverter pads, and fencing.
- The Applicant will obtain a Stormwater NPDES NOI Permit prior to construction and will use Environmentally Sensitive Design Best Management Practices for storm water management.
- PPRP has requested that a copy of the Stormwater Management and Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan be provided for review upon completion.

Forested Areas

- According to the ERD, very minimal tree cutting will be required.
- PPRP has requested additional information regarding what, if any vegetation will be removed and whether the Applicant has identified potential areas for onsite or offsite Forest Conservation Mitigation.

Visual Impacts

- Open views are present along Egypt Road and from agricultural properties to the west. Nearby sensitive receptors include Snows Turn Park, Maple Elementary School, and Chesapeake Forest Lands.
- There is low potential for glare impact to surrounding properties.
- The Applicant plans to provide any necessary screening through a buffer of indigenous shrubs, trees, and grass plantings along Egypt Rd. PPRP has requested additional information regarding the location of such plantings, and whether the City of Cambridge has been contacted with regard to landscape and setback requirements.

Potential for Release of Hazardous Substances

- PPRP has requested additional information from the Applicant regarding whether Project components (such as the solar panels or transformers) could contain hazardous substances as well as measures to be taken to ensure releases to the land or air will be controlled in the event of damage to such components.

Socioeconomic Impacts

- The project could be encumbered by a Property Agreement between the former owner and one adjacent property owner to the east. The agreement requires 225-foot setback from the joint property line. The Applicant claims that the agreement does not apply to this Project.
- The nearest airport is located 3.2 miles away. No impacts to air navigation are expected.
- Project is located within Heart of the Chesapeake Country Heritage Area. The Applicant has sent a consultation letter to the Dorchester County Office of Tourism.
- The Project is located near, but not adjacent to two scenic byways: Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad (some open views of northern part of the Project are possible) and Michener's Chesapeake County (no views likely due to existing forested buffer).

Other

- PPRP has requested further information from the Applicant regarding whether improvements will be made to a Project access road I.
- The Project will include a 0.8 mile interconnection and two new substations (one at the Project and one at the interconnection). PPRP has requested additional information from the Applicant regarding the interconnection route, whether it will be constructed below or above ground, and construction details for the substations.

CPCN Status

- CPCN Application filed on 12/20/16.
- For current information, see: <http://www.psc.state.md.us/>