

PPRP Fact Sheet – Morgnec Road Solar Project, Kent County

PSC Case Number 9438

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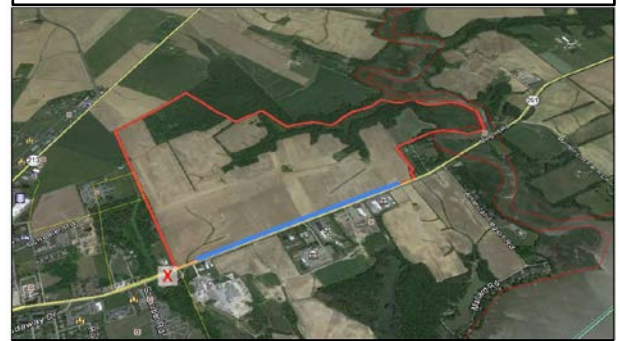
Last updated 6 September 2017

Project Overview:

Morgnec Road Solar, LLC (a subsidiary of Urban Grid) has filed for a CPCN to construct and operate a 57.04 MW solar array in Kent County (Figure 1). The Project will occupy 255 acres spanning three parcels that total 476 acres near Chestertown. Project components include:

- 213,808 photovoltaic (PV) modules mounted on either a fixed-tilt or horizontal axis tracking racking system,
- 23 DC to AC power inverters and transformers,
- A new on-site substation;
- Other interconnection equipment to connect to the Chestertown Substation.

Figure 1: Project Location



Source: Morgnec Solar CPCN Application.

Figure 2: Overhead View of Project and Industrial Site across Morgnec Road



Site Description

The three parcels that comprise the Project are owned by a single landowner. The Applicant has contracted to lease or purchase a 446-acre portion of the three parcels via an Option to Purchase Agreement.

The parcels are currently zoned as Rural Residential and Community Residential, the current land use is agricultural fields.

No part of the Project is considered to be Prime Farmland. Absent the CPCN, local regulations would prohibit the Project because utility scale solar energy systems are not a permitted use within this zoning district.

The area along Morgnec Road near the Project is a combination of commercial and industrial land uses. The area directly across Morgnec Road from the Project is zoned as Industrial District and contains corrugated metal industrial buildings, a junkyard, and other industrial facilities.

Impact Assessment Highlights (based on the Applicant's review)

Biological

- The Project area does not contain any forests, and no trees will be removed as part of the Project. Afforestation mitigation will be required; the Applicant will consult with Kent County and comply with County requirements for afforestation mitigation.
- There are no records of rare, threatened or endangered species at the Project.
- Non-tidal wetlands occur within the Project site, and a portion of the site is within the Critical Area. The Project will avoid these features and will maintain appropriate setbacks, as required by Kent County.

Economic and Fiscal

- The Project is expected to create 150-175 temporary design, management, and construction jobs.
- The Project represents a capital investment of approximately \$100 million.
- Economic benefits to the State and county will be primarily in the form of corporate income tax revenues.
- The Project will displace 255 acres of agricultural land use, but will not affect land use on surrounding properties.

Transportation

- During construction, major material and equipment will be delivered by tractor-trailers. Daily construction traffic will include cars, trucks, and other personal vehicles.
- There will be limited traffic to and from the solar array during operation. Traffic will mostly be limited to maintenance crews for mowing and vegetation maintenance.

Visual impacts

- Landscape buffering that meets Kent County's Site Plan review requirements will mitigate views of the facility structures from adjoining public roads and properties.
- The Project will not create substantial light if its lighting plan satisfies Kent County's exterior lighting requirements.
- While the likelihood of glare trespass is minimal, the Project will be designed in substantial conformance with Kent County's requirements for utility-scale projects such that glare will not interfere with traffic or create a safety hazard.

Cultural & Aesthetic

- The Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) is requiring that the Project evaluate any structure over 50 years old within the Area of Potential Effect for the National Register. MHT is also requiring a Phase I archeological investigation based on the determination that several prehistoric sites have been identified just east of the Project area.
- The Project lies within the programmatic boundary of the Stories of the Chesapeake Cultural Heritage Area (CHA). Although there are no historic buildings or sites at the Project Site, the Applicant will implement appropriate mitigation through a memorandum of understanding with MHT which will mitigate any impacts on the Stories of the CHA.

Other

- The operational features of the project will be controlled through a Project Operations & Maintenance Agreement. This includes the immediate dispatch of fire, police, or contractors in the event of an emergency or outage.
- The Project's operation will not emit significant traffic, noise, air or water pollutants, or generate any hazardous waste that could potentially affect public health. At the end of the facility's useful life, a decommissioning plan will return the Project site to its original state. Thus, the Project will minimally affect the local environment and is unlikely to affect property values.

CPCN Status

- CPCN Application filed on 12/23/16.
- For more current information, see: <http://www.psc.state.md.us/>