Note:
This summary was last updated on
May 6, 2024
For current information, follow this link:
PSC Docket Case #9723

Crockett Solar Project
Off Route 404, East of Route 50 Corridor
Cordova, Maryland (Talbot County)

PSC Case #9723

PPRP Case Manager: Mark Mank

Note:
This summary is based on information provided in the CPCN Application filed with the PSC on **Jan 31, 2024,** which is subject to change and have not yet been fully reviewed by PPRP.

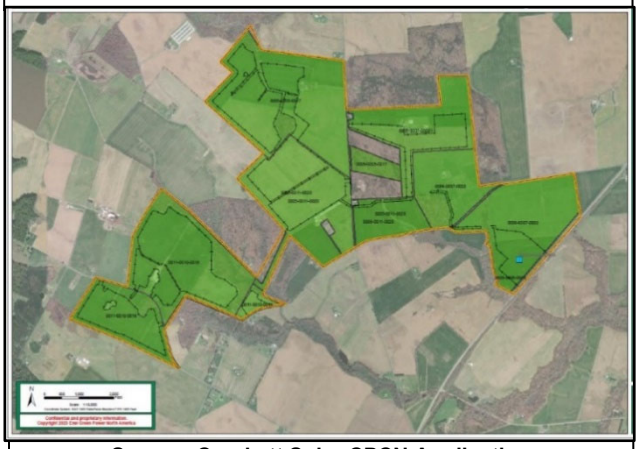
CPCN Timeline

CPCN Application filed on February 1st, 2024
Applicant's Filed Direct Testimony Due: July 9, 2024
1st Public Hearing (Virtual): Week of July 15, 2024
Intervenors' Direct Testimony Due: October 25, 2024
2nd Public Hearing: Week of November 4, 2024
Settlement Status Update: November 7, 2024
PSC Evidentiary Hearing (if settlement is reached): November 12, 2024

Project Location:

The Crockett Solar Project (Project) will be located on six parcels totaling 1,387 acres in Cordova, Maryland (Figure 1) in Talbot County. Google Map Link. Per the Applicant, the approximate limit of disturbance (LOD) for the Project will be 534 acres.

Figure 1. Project Location



Source: Crockett Solar CPCN Application

Project Overview:

Crockett Solar I, LLC (Applicant) has applied for a CPCN to construct a 61.20 MW AC solar array including a 20 MWh (megawatt hour) Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) in Talbot County.

Project components include:

- 141,561 solar modules mounted on a single-axis tracking rack system;
- 17 power stations, each including 1 inverter and 1 liquid AC transformer;
- Up to 7 pad-mounted containerized units associated with the BESS;
- Interconnection equipment; and
- A Project Substation.

Site Description

The Project site is composed of six different parcels, which will be interconnected via electrical connections installed via either open trenching or horizontal directional drilling (HDD). Three of the parcels are required for easements to connect the Project. The Project parcels are currently either open farm fields or wooded areas. Some of the parcels have existing residential dwellings and/or farm accessory buildings. The entire site is considered either Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide importance. Currently, the Project has contracted with the owners of the Project parcels to either buy portions of the parcels or lease the parcels under long-term leases. The Project site is zoned Agriculture Conservation ("AC") and per the current Talbot County Zoning Ordinance, large scale solar energy systems ("SES") are permitted by special exception in the AC zone.

The Project will interconnect into the DPL transmission system via a tap on the Easton to Steele 138kV circuit. The Project will include a new 138kV three-breaker ring bus substation to be constructed next to the proposed BESS and across Cordova Road from the existing Easton-Steele 138kV circuit. It is the Applicant's understanding that DPL will construct the interconnection component under Cordova Road and the point of interconnection will be on the southeastern side of Cordova Road where the existing transmission line is located.

Impact Assessment Highlights

Biological

- According to the Applicant's ERD, the Project currently does not include any forest clearing.
- The Applicant states that the project is located in a Tier II catchment area, but that the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) has decided that a Tier II antidegradation review is not necessary.

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

- MDE has visited the site and confirmed that the Project will avoid all wetlands and jurisdictional waters. MDE also confirmed the need for the Applicant to apply for a Letter of Authorization for wetland buffer impacts and two culvert crossings within the proposed site.
- The Project is adjacent to multiple streams and wetlands, which flow to Tuckahoe Creek, the Choptank River, and the Chesapeake Bay. The Applicant states they will implement a 100-foot vegetative buffer around all blue line streams and jurisdictional waters, as well as a 35-foot buffer around wetlands and tree driplines, and a 15-foot buffer around agricultural ditches.
- All electrical crossings of wetlands, streams, and forested areas will be installed via HDD with bore holes located in upland areas, outside of all buffers. The Applicant has indicated that a Frac-Out Mitigation Contingency Plan will be prepared to mitigate any inadvertent releases of drilling fluids to the surrounding areas.
- The Applicant consulted with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife and Heritage Service (DNR-WHS), which identified three species of sensitive freshwater mussels in Norwich Creek, that drains the northernmost section of the Project. DNR-WHS has provided the Applicant with appropriate protection measures to minimize impacts to these species. The Applicant's ERD indicates U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has determined there are no critical habitats within the Project area.
- The Applicant estimates that the Project will add approximately 17.8 acres of impervious surface.

Noise Impacts

- The Applicant's ERD states that the only noise generated from the Project will be from the enclosed transformers, inverters, and the onsite substation. The closest distance between any residential dwelling and the onsite substation is approximately 175 feet and approximately 892 feet from the closest inverter pad.

Visual Impacts

- The Applicant proposes to enclose the Project with a six-foot-tall chain-link fence around the perimeter with an additional one foot of three-strand barbed wire. A landscape buffer is also proposed that would be 20 feet wide consisting of a mix of deciduous trees, evergreen trees, and deciduous shrubs.
- The Applicant notes seven Airports within a 10-mile radius of the project. The Applicant used the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Notice Criteria Tool to determine that FAA notification was not required for the Project and the Maryland Aviation Administration's (MAA) Airport Zoning Permit Web Map to determine the Project is not an obstruction or hazard to air navigation.

Cultural Resource Impacts

- The Applicant has corresponded with the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) which has determined that the Project is unlikely to have an effect on archeological resources and no additional archeological investigations are recommended. However, MHT did determine that the project could have a potential effect on one of the four historic properties identified in the vicinity of the Project. The Applicant is continuing to coordinate with MHT to determine an appropriate mitigation strategy for this property.

Public Safety and Transportation

- The Applicant's ERD states during construction, large materials and equipment will be transported to staging areas by tractor-trailers and offloaded by construction vehicles. During operation, traffic will mostly be limited to maintenance crews for seasonal mowing and vegetation maintenance as well as maintenance for any operational issues.
- The Applicant states that the Project will provide proper access for emergency and fire equipment, including access lanes to inverters, transformers, and switchgear with widths to accommodate emergency vehicles consistent with State Fire Marshal and local emergency access standards.
- The Applicant states The Project will have four permanent entrances off Skipton Cordova Rd, two temporary entrances off Blades Rd, one permanent entrance off Connolly Rd, two permanent entrances off Cordova Rd (MD Route 309), and two temporary entrances off Cordova Rd (MD Route 309).

Economic and Fiscal

- The Applicant estimates that the Project will create approximately 190 design, management, and construction personnel working remotely or on the Site, including 52 direct, 88 indirect, and 50 induced at the height of construction.
- The Applicant indicates that the Project represents a capital investment of approximately $77 million.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Avoided

- The Applicant indicates that the Project would reduce carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions by approximately 4,480 tons per year according to their Avoided Emissions and geneRation Tool (AVERT) calculations.