Note:
This summary was last updated on
August 1, 2024
For current information, follow this link:
PSC Docket Case #9740

Pocomoke City Solar
610 Ocean Highway
Pocomoke City, Maryland 21851
(Worcester County)

PSC Case #9740

PPRP Case Manager: Mark Mank

Note:
This summary is based on information provided in the CPCN Application filed with the PSC on May 20, 2024, all of which are subject to change and have not yet been fully reviewed by PPRP.

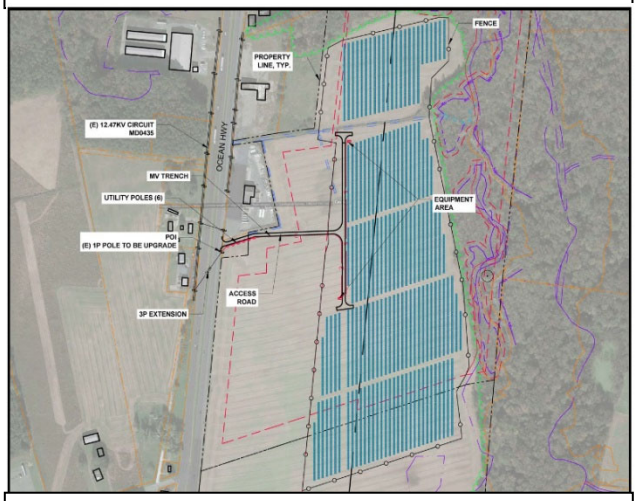
CPCN Timeline

CPCN Application filed on May 20,2024
Applicant's Filed Direct Testimony Due: September 20, 2024
1st Public Hearing (Virtual): October 2, 2024
PPRP and OPC Direct Testimony Due: January 6, 2025
PSC Staff Direct Testimony Due: January 13, 2025
2nd Public Hearing: January 23, 2025
Settlement Status Update: January 24, 2025
PSC Evidentiary Hearing (if settlement is reached): January 28, 2025

Project Location:

The Pocomoke City Solar Project (Project) will be located on a 121.5-acre parcel in Pocomoke City, Maryland (Figure 1). Google Map Link. Per the Applicant, the approximate limit of disturbance (LOD) for the Project will be 35.9 acres.

Figure 1. Project Location



Source: Applicant's ERD, Appendix C

Project Overview:

Pocomoke City Community Energy Initiative LLC (Applicant) has applied for a CPCN to construct a 5.0 MW AC solar array in Worcester County.

Project components include:

- 13,416 Jinko 560W solar PV modules (or equivalent) mounted on a single axis tracker system,
- 34 string inverters, and
- Two equipment pads where the transformers will be located and the string inverters will be aggregated.
- Overhead lines connecting to the existing transmission line along Ocean Highway will be used for interconnection.

Site Description

The majority of the topography of the site is flat with a few steeply sloped areas. The subject site generally consists of open agricultural fields and wooded areas The site offers immediate access to a major highway and existing three-phase power. The site has limited residential abutters and the site area is large enough to set the Project away from the public view and Ocean Highway (US Route 13). The western portion of the subject site is comprised predominantly of agricultural fields. The subject site contains approximately 38.6 acres of forest, predominantly located in the northern, southern, and eastern portions of the subject site. The Project will predominantly be located within the portion of the subject site designated as C-2 (General Commercial District). The RP (Resource Protection) district within the southern portion of the site will not be impacted as a result of the Project.

The Project is a Community Solar Energy Generating System and will deliver all of its output to subscribers via the Delmarva Power and Light electric distribution grid. Applicant is approved as a subscriber organization by the PSC for 5MW AC at the site, and at the time of filing, the Delmarva Power interconnection application has been submitted but is awaiting technical feedback. The Project point of interconnection (POI) will be along Ocean Highway and the Project will require the installation of an express circuit from the POI along the highway to Pocomoke Substation. The interconnection is anticipated to utilize as much existing infrastructure as possible for the express circuit to the aforementioned substation.

Impact Assessment Highlights

Biological

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

- The Project will be located within the existing agricultural field on the subject site adjacent to three streams and six wetlands. The applicant will implement a 25-foot wetland and 100-year floodplain buffer and anticipates no impacts to streams, wetlands, nontidal wetland buffers, or 100-year floodplains as a result of the development of the site.
- MDE determined no authorization under the waterway construction regulations is necessary and the site will not require a NTW [nontidal wetland] permit from MDE.
- The site drains into the Pocomoke River.
- The proposed development area is not encumbered by environmental sensitive or critical areas, agricultural preservation areas, or historic areas.
- The US Fish and Wildlife Service made a determination that the project action is not likely to result in unauthorized take of the Northern Long-Eared Bat.

Noise Impacts

- The Applicant states that the closest noise receptor is an existing commercial business located north of the proposed site access road, approximately 750 feet from the northern inverter pad.
- The closest sensitive noise receptor is a residential property located west of Ocean Highway, approximately 870 feet from the southern inverter pad.
- The project will make a maximum of 107 dBA at peak construction.

Visual Impacts

- The Applicant proposes to surround the western and southern perimeter of the Project with a planted vegetative buffer.
- The Project buffer will consist of evergreen trees planted 10-foot on-center in a meandering pattern and areas to the north and east will be buffered by existing vegetation and woodlands.

Cultural Resource Impacts

- The Applicant has corresponded with the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) which has determined that the Project will have no adverse effect on historic properties.

Public Safety and Transportation

- The Project will provide proper access for emergency and fire equipment, including access lanes to inverters, transformers, and switchgear with widths suitable to accommodate emergency vehicles consistent with State Fire Marshal and local emergency access standards.
- Public safety and transportation will predominantly be affected during the construction phase of the Project, at which point equipment will be mobilized to the subject site.
- 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 crews for seasonal mowing and vegetation maintenance as well as maintenance for any operational issues.
- The applicant states that there are eight airports within 10 miles of the Project.
- The Applicant consulted the FAA for their review of the Project and requested an official aeronautical study. FAA determined the Project is not a hazard to air navigation.
- The Applicant's ERD states that the Project is not an obstruction or hazard to air navigation.

Economic and Fiscal

- The Applicant estimates that the Project will create 37 construction, labor, and installation jobs during the construction period and 2 operation and maintenance jobs post-construction.
- During operation, the Project will generate $83,500 annually in local revenue which includes taxes and return on investment to local investors.
- Overall, the Project's capital investment including land acquisition, engineering, entitlements, and construction costs is approximately $25 million.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Avoided

- Air quality effects during the construction of the photovoltaic station will be associated with fugitive dust due to earthwork and carbon emissions due to the use of heavy machinery.
- The Applicant estimates that these effects will be minor and temporary and should not be impactful to the air quality in the long term.
- The Project will reduce Carbon Dioxide Emissions by 6780 tons.