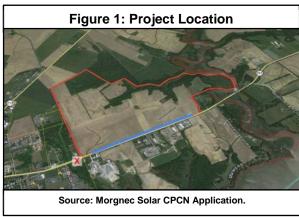# PPRP Fact Sheet – Morgnec Road Solar Project, Kent County
PSC Case Number 9499

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Last updated 24 June 2019

Project Overview

Morgnec Road Solar, LLC has filed for a CPCN to construct and operate a 45 MW solar array in Kent County (Figure 1). The Applicant anticipates optimizing the design to find the best DC/AC ratio and panel type for the Project; both efforts will likely increase the total capacity of the Project. However, the Project will be bound by the PJM number of 55.8 MW AC. The Project will occupy approximately 250 acres spanning two parcels that total 471 acres near Chestertown. Project components include:

Figure 1: Project Location

Source: Morgnec Solar CPCN Application.

- Approximately 140,000 photovoltaic (PV) modules and single axis tracking racking system,
- Approximately 18 DC to AC power inverters and transformers,
- A new on-site substation, and
- Other interconnection equipment to connect to the Chestertown Substation located across Rt. 291 from the Project. Interconnection is expected to be installed underground.

Note: This fact sheet was prepared based upon information provided in the CPCN Application, and does not reflect State agency reviews.

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

Site Description

The two parcels that comprise the Project are owned by a single landowner; the Applicant has contracted to lease or purchase the parcels via an Option to Purchase Agreement. The property consists of agricultural fields as well as wooded areas.

The portions of the parcels that will be occupied by the Project are currently zoned as Rural Residential and Community Residential. Approximately 70% of the Project area is considered Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance. The Applicant submitted a Text Amendment with Kent County on 2 October 2018, which would allow approval of utility scale solar projects within these zoning designations through a Special Exception. The amendment was rejected by the Kent County Commissioners in a vote held on 2 April 2019.

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

Impact Assessment Highlights

Biological
- A portion of one of the two Project parcels is located within the Critical Area Resource Conservation Area (RCA); however, the Project design avoids disturbance in this area.
- Wetlands are present within the property and some of the drainage ditches onsite also connect with other wetlands and hydric soils; the Project design avoids disturbance of these areas.
- The Applicant is not proposing to cut any forested areas onsite and will only be removing a few isolated trees surrounding the existing farmhouse. Afforestation mitigation will be required; the Applicant intends to use the remaining forest stands onsite for mitigation.
- There are no records of rare, threatened or endangered species at the property.
- The Applicant intends to incorporate pollinator habitat into its grounds maintenance plan.

Economic and Fiscal

- The Project is expected to create between 100 and 200 temporary design, management, and construction jobs.
- The Applicant states that the Project represents a capital investment of $80 million.
- Economic benefits to the State and County will be primarily in the form of corporate income tax revenues.
- The Project will displace approximately 250 acres of agricultural land use.

Transportation

- During construction, equipment will be delivered by tractor-trailer. Excavation and other heavy equipment to be used may include front loaders, dump trucks, concrete trucks, excavators, trenching equipment, backhoes, post installation equipment, and other similar vehicles and equipment. Daily construction traffic will include pickup trucks and other personnel vehicles.
- Nearby airports include Kent & Queen Anne's Hospital, Ybarc Farm Airport-MD19, Nuodex Incorporated Helicopter, Wright Field, and Cromwell Farm Airport. The Applicant's glare analysis indicates that the Project would not result in any glare impacts to any of these airports. The Applicant has also completed the Federal Aviation Administration notice criteria tool, which indicates no application is necessary.

Visual Impacts

- The edges of the Project property are heavily wooded on three sides.
- The Applicant has engaged a certified/licensed Landscape Architect to design a landscape buffer for the Project, particularly along Morgnec Road. The landscape buffer plan will also be informed by the Applicant's glare analysis to ensure that adjacent roads and neighboring properties are not impacted by glare.

Cultural and Aesthetic

- The Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) has determined that the Project is located in an area of interest. An onsite Phase I Archeological Investigation and Determination of Eligibility assessment will be completed and provided to MHT for review.
- The Project site lies within the programmatic boundary of the Stories of the Chesapeake Cultural Heritage Area (CHA). The Applicant proposes to have open sessions with the community and the Kent Conservation and Preservation Alliance in order to design the Project to protect this area.
- A portion of the Chesapeake Country Maryland Scenic Byway (State Route 213) bypasses the Project to the west.
- Two on-road bicycle routes (the Historic County Loop and the Kent and Queen Anne's Loop) bypass the Project to the east and south, respectively. Views of the Project site from these routes are either currently blocked by existing residences and other structures or will be altered so that passersby will view a landscape buffer rather than an agricultural view.

Public Service Impacts

- Water and sewer utilities will not be needed for the Project.

CPCN Status

- CPCN Application filed on 11/30/18.
- The Procedural Schedule was issued on 3/11/19.
- Intervenors in the proceeding include Kent County, the Town of Chestertown, and Kent Conservation and Preservation Alliance.
- A public hearing was held on 4/24/19.
- For current information, see: Morgnec Road PSC case jacket