



Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

Rebecca Cameron Valcq, Chairperson
Ellen Nowak, Commissioner
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4822 Madison Yards Way
P.O. Box 7854
Madison, WI 53707-7854

July 27, 2020

Re: Application for a Certificate of Public Convenience and
Necessity of Onion River Solar, LLC to Construct a Solar
Electric Generation Facility in the Town of Holland,
Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

9805-CE-100

To the Person Addressed:

The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (Commission) received an application from Onion River Solar, LLC (controlled by D.E. Shaw Renewable Investments, LLC) for the construction of a new 150 Megawatt (MW) solar electric generation facility. ([PSC REF#: 390450](#)). The proposed utility scale solar installation would be located in the town of Holland, Sheboygan County, Wisconsin in Sections 4 - 9, 17, and 18, in Township 13 North, Range 22 East. The Commission is sending this letter to notify property owners near the proposed solar facilities, as well as individuals who have asked to be placed on our mailing list, that the Commission will be conducting an environmental assessment (EA) for the proposed project. This letter is also being sent to public officials who may wish to place this notification in a location where it can be viewed by the public.

Commission and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff are now reviewing the application and analyzing the environmental impacts that may occur as a result of the construction of the proposed project. This letter is to notify interested persons that the scoping period for the proposed project has begun and agencies encourage persons with local information or environmental concerns to submit comments on the proposed Onion River Solar Generation Project to the Commission.

Comments regarding the scope of the environmental assessment of the proposed project can be submitted through:

- The Commission's website at <http://psc.wi.gov> where you can go to the "e-services" tab toward the top of the webpage, then click "file a comment" on the left hand side of the page, then locate docket 9805-CE-100, or
- A letter addressed to the Commission's Environmental Assessment Coordinator for this docket (see contacts at the end of this letter).

Please note that comments will be made available to the public via the Commission's Electronic Records Filing System. Personally identifying information is not edited or deleted from

submissions. Effective topics to mention in comments on the scope of the environmental assessment may include:

- potential human and environmental impacts from the proposed solar generation facilities,
- specific comments regarding particular locations of the proposed solar arrays (see attached map for labels of each fenced array area), or
- specific actions or changes to the proposed project that could minimize or mitigate potential impacts from the proposed Onion River Solar Generation Project.

The deadline for submitting scoping comments on the environmental assessment for the Onion River Solar Generation Project is August 28, 2020.

There will be two additional public comment periods during the Commission's review process of the proposed project where the Commission will solicit comments from the public regarding the following:

- preliminary determination of the EA, and
- public hearing.

General Project Description

Onion River Solar, LLC is proposing to develop, design, permit, construct and operate a 150 MW photovoltaic (PV) solar electric generation facility in the town of Holland, Sheboygan County, Wisconsin. Ranger Power LLC developed the project on behalf of Onion River Solar LLC. The proposed project area covers approximately 1,900 acres that would be developed to host the proposed solar facilities. The major components of the proposed project include PV panels, power conversion units, inverters, approximately 20 miles of underground 34.5 kilovolt (kV) collector circuits, 138kV project substation that would be located near an existing substation, 138kV overhead Gen-Tie line (350 feet), potential battery energy storage system (BESS), and an operation and maintenance building. The proposed project includes 23 fenced array areas (17 proposed and 6 alternate array sites) that can be identified by their fence boundary identification number, as seen in the attached map.

Wisconsin Power and Light Company is proposing to acquire, construct, own, and operate the Onion River Solar Generation Project (if approved), which is currently being reviewed by the Commission and DNR in docket 6680-CE-182.

State and Federal Agency Jurisdiction

The proposed project requires a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity from the Commission before construction can begin. Based on the record of analysis of potential environmental and societal impacts, the Commission will decide whether to approve, modify, or deny Onion River Solar, LLC's proposal. The DNR will consider the application for wetland

and waterway permits, if applicable under Wis. Stat. ch. 30, potential impacts to rare species, and other affected resources under its jurisdiction. Other reviews, approvals, or permits may be necessary from state or federal agencies.

Environmental Assessment

The solar electric generation facility is a Type III action under Wis. Admin. Code § PSC 4.10(3). Type III actions normally do not require preparation of an EA or an environmental impact statement (EIS) under Wis. Admin. Code § PSC 4.10(3). However, an evaluation of a specific Type III proposal may indicate that the preparation of an EA is warranted for that proposal. The Commission will prepare an EA for this project that will evaluate the location of the project and its potential environmental, community, and private property impacts. There will be a preliminary determination when the EA is complete that will determine whether the preparation of an EIS is necessary. Comments on this preliminary determination will be accepted and considered before a final determination is made. At the time of the preliminary determination, the Commission shall make copies of the EA available to those persons that request it.

Public Hearings and Commission Decision

The Commission will hold technical and public hearing on the proposed project. At least 30 days before the hearings, the Commission will mail a Notice of Hearing to those on the project mailing list and notify the local news media. The Notice will include the time, date, and location of the hearings, as well as instructions regarding how to provide testimony for the hearing record. If you have any concerns about the project, you should attend the hearing to make the Commission aware of your concerns. People can ask questions, speak about, and submit comments about the project at the hearing. The Commission must base its decisions about the project, in part, on the record of the hearing. The Commission will discuss the record for this project at a meeting open to the public prior to making to its decision.

Information and Contacts

To review project application materials and additional related documents, refer to the following:

- PSC website (<http://psc.wi.gov>) under the docket's "E-Services" tab, docket search number 9805-CE-100.
- PSC website (<http://psc.wi.gov>) type "Onion River Solar" in the search field to navigate to the project webpage.
- An interactive webmap of the proposed project is available at: <https://www.tinyurl.com/onionriver9805ce100>

Agency Contacts:

- PSC Environmental Assessment Coordinator
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Sincerely,



Cindy Burtley
Environmental Analysis & Review Specialist
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs

CLB:kle DL:01753631

Attachment

Onion River Solar Project 9805-CE-100

