

BEFORE THE POWER SITING BOARD OF THE STATE OF OHIO

**In the Matter of the Application of Willowbrook Solar)
I, LLC to Amend its Certificate of Environmental)
Compatibility and Public Need for the Willowbrook) Case No. 21-0005-EL-BGA
Solar Farm)**

Members of the Board:

Chair, Public Utilities Commission	Ohio House of Representatives
Director, Development Services Agency	Ohio Senate
Director, Department of Health	
Director, Department of Agriculture	
Director, Environmental Protection Agency	
Director, Department of Natural Resources	
Public Member	

To the Honorable Power Siting Board:

Please review the attached Staff Report of Investigation, which has been filed in accordance with Ohio Power Siting Board rules. The application in this case is subject to an approval process as required by Section 4906.03 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Sincerely,



Theresa White
Executive Director
Ohio Power Siting Board

OPSB STAFF REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

Project Name: Willowbrook Solar Farm
Case Number: 21-0005-EL-BGA (associated with prior Case No. 18-1024-EL-BGN)
Project Location: Highland and Brown counties
Applicant: Willowbrook Solar I, LLC
Application Filing Date: January 13, 2021
Inspection Date: April 21, 2021
Report Date: April 22, 2021
Applicant’s Waiver Requests: None
Staff Assigned: G. Zeto

Summary of Staff Recommendations (see discussion below):

Application: Approval Disapproval Approval with Conditions
Waiver: Approval Disapproval Not Applicable

Application Description

On April 4, 2019, the Ohio Power Siting Board (Board) issued a certificate (the Certificate) to Willowbrook Solar I, LLC (Applicant) in Case No. 18-1024-EL-BGN for the construction, operation, and maintenance of a solar-powered electric generation facility of up to 150 megawatts (MW) located in Concord and White Oak townships, Highland County, and Eagle Township, Brown County.

The Applicant proposes a modification to the Certificate, with the addition of approximately 28 acres of private land, creating a total project area of approximately 2,292 acres for the area to accommodate additional collection line routes. The additional acreage is comprised of six parcels. This amendment application includes 1.9 miles of new collection line routes, 1.5 miles of which will be located in the project area presented in the original application. The purpose of these collection line routes is to provide shorter and more direct connections between the northern parts of the project area and the substation and associated collection yard. The facility final layout would not include all proposed collection routes presented in the applications. The Applicant states that utilizing these newly proposed collection line routes may result in a decrease in overall impacts as final routes are selected.

Application Review

Social Impacts

The proposed modifications would not significantly increase impacts to existing land uses. No additional agricultural districts would be impacted. Two residences, including one participating and one non-participating, would be located within 250 feet of the new collection lines. No residences would be located within 100 feet.

Cultural Resources

The Applicant has prepared mapping and desktop research on archeological resources in the project area and is coordinating its field investigation with the Ohio Historic Preservation Office (OHPO) for the overall facility. The Applicant is in the process of completing field studies. As a result of an OHPO approved Reconnaissance-Level Historic Resources Survey, the Applicant found that the project would not impact any buildings eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. In response to the Applicant's report, the OHPO concurred the Applicant's findings and stated that no additional history/architecture investigations are necessary.

Surface Waters

The newly proposed collection lines would result in five additional crossings of four previously uncrossed streams, including three intermittent streams and one ephemeral stream. Once the final routes for the collection lines are selected, there will be a maximum of three stream crossings. Where feasible, all stream crossings associated with collection lines would be done using horizontal directional drilling. No new wetland impacts are proposed.

Adherence to the conditions of the original certificate including implementation of the storm water pollution prevention plan would minimize impacts to surface water resources that could occur as a result of the proposed modifications.

Listed Species

The proposed modifications would not result in increased impacts to listed wildlife species. Adherence to the conditions of the original certificate would minimize impacts to listed species.

Recommended Findings

Staff's review of the amendment application included consideration of the requirements listed in Ohio Revised Code Section 4906.10. Based on Staff's review, the amendment application meets the necessary criteria for granting an amended certificate. Staff recommends that the Board approve the proposed amendment to the Certificate, provided that the following conditions are satisfied.

Recommended Conditions:

- (1) The Applicant shall continue to adhere to all conditions as certificated in Case No. 18-1024-EL-BGN.
- (2) The certificate authority provided in this case shall not exempt the facility from any other applicable and lawful local, state, or federal rules or regulations nor be used to affect the exercise of discretion of any other local, state, or federal permitting or licensing authority with regard to areas subject to their supervision or control.
- (3) Prior to the commencement of construction activities in areas that require permits or authorizations by federal or state laws and regulations, the Applicant shall obtain and comply with such permits or authorizations. The Applicant shall provide copies of permits and authorizations, including all supporting documentation, on the case docket prior to commencement of construction.

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Case No(s). 21-0005-EL-BGA

Summary: Staff Report of Investigation electronically filed by Mr. Matt Butler on behalf of Staff of OPSB