

Empire Solar Virtual Community Meeting Q&A

April 22, 2021

1. What are the plans to reduce the disruption to forested areas? This appears to be the headwaters to Lake Erie and trees hold many benefits to the watershed.

In the interest of being a responsible renewable project developer, we work to avoid environmental impacts to the maximum extent practicable – that is how we design our projects, and that is why when we develop a project, we make sure that we have more land that we need to actually fit the project. The map shown in the presentation includes some areas in the northwest of the project area where there are impacts to forested acres, but it is important to note that the map shows more panels than we actually need to make our projected limit of 125 megawatts, and we have some more study data coming that will help us inform changes to the layout. We do a flyover (a ‘Lidar’ - a laser guided topographic study), and that has to be done after the snow. While it took a bit for the snow in Chautauqua County to completely melt, we did complete the flyover Lidar and will be receiving some topographical information from this study. We will be changing the current layout a bit based on topography and that will impact the wooded areas – it will reduce the amount of forested areas that we operate in.

As mentioned in the presentation, TRC has already conducted some wetland delineation efforts and other environmental studies, so we are doing an inventory of those important resources. We're paying very close attention to forested areas; we're analyzing and taking notes on habitat in forested areas as well as wetlands and streams. Consolidating all that information into that wetland delineation report is our first idea of what the Project area looks like in terms of environmental resources and is our first conversation starter with DEC (New York Department of Environmental Conservation). We have conversations with DEC to make sure we are addressing what we know to be valuable resources and are trying to use that information to adjust and accommodate the layout accordingly.

2. What was the highest number of listeners during this meeting?

30 individuals.

3. Does AES have any other similar solar projects currently operating in New York State, and if so, where are those projects located?

We do not currently have any projects of this size operating in New York, and in fact you'll notice that no projects of this size are currently operating in the state. We do have a 20 megawatt project located in Riverhead (in Suffolk County, Long Island) that is the second or third largest solar project currently operating in New York.

We have a total of about 40 megawatts operating in Long Island. In total in New York, we are operating about 160 megawatts, generally made up of smaller distributed solar projects, and those are throughout New York state. So we currently have nothing similar in scale operating in the state, but we have a lot of experience building solar projects in New York, and we've been

able to build one of the currently larger solar projects in the state, the Riverhead Solar project in Long Island.

4. Please describe the battery storage facility. Please include in this description a summary of the hazardous substances used/stored in the facility and the quantities of such materials.

The battery storage facility will comprise approximately one acre adjacent to the project substation and will be made up of battery cells. In terms of the safety features, we will be integrating this information into the application and will have a bit more information as we solidify this piece. This is still a proposed addition to our project, and we won't be making a complete decision on it until we actually file our application, which will be later in the summer.

5. Are there any plans to increase the amount of storage considering the size of the project?

At this point, there is not. As mentioned, we are still in the preliminary phase of this decision and need to figure out exactly what company we're going to utilize for our battery storage, but as regards the size of the storage component, there isn't a plan to increase. The battery storage component is not going to be larger than what we currently have planned.

6. We have heard nothing or very little from our Town Board. Perhaps this is because of your change in ownership? What communications have you had with the Westfield Town officials since May 2020?

Because of COVID, we haven't had the ability to do too many personal reach-outs, though Eric Will has been engaged with the town board and the planning board. We had an actual meeting with the town zoning official just last week and had a few meetings earlier this year. When we had our last communication with the Westfield town officials back in May (2020), we let them know that we were going into an engineering, development, and environmental study phase. This was a phase where we had let the town know what we were looking to do with this project, and then we let them know that we were going to be doing environmental studies, geotechnicals, surveys, all kinds of different studies, and so for that period we were a bit radio silent. Because of COVID and all the studies that were going on, there really wasn't any more information to transfer to the town, but we were there to answer any questions from the town if they asked us.

Additionally, there is a project website (www.aes.com/empire-solar-project) that has been carried over by AES from the original website hosted by National Grid. The website has been operating throughout this entire period of time and has provided updates on the project, even if we have not been having these types of meetings. We are also available via several different avenues – our toll-free NY phone number (866-757-7697), project email (empiresolar@aes.com) and website, etc. if anyone has any questions. We are trying to be as open and available as possible.

7. Are any bat studies required for this project?

As part of the 94-c process, and to address potential rare threatened and endangered (RT&E) species in proximity to the project area, we've looked at publicly available resource databases. In addition to that, 94-c requires us to consult with DEC pretty early in the project development process. During these consultations, we provide data to DEC in terms of what we have found in the field, and we also receive data from their databases of known occurrences of RT&E species. With respect to bats, during project planning we will continue consulting with DEC and as necessary, we'll adhere to the clearing window restrictions when the time comes for construction. In the meantime, our biologists will note any indication of roost trees and things of that nature, but there are no specific bat studies that are planned at this time. But of course, in consultation with DEC we will be addressing what is necessary to avoid those species.

8. What sort of noise is emitted? Is there noise from the battery storage facility?

A project like this does emit some sounds, but nowhere near that of some other types of renewable energy projects. The facility will include solar inverters that convert the DC (direct current) produced by the solar panels to AC (alternating current), and there is similar equipment associated with the battery storage facility – cooling fans, things to that effect. All the sounds that these pieces of equipment emit will be studied in a very detailed manner, and these studies will ensure that we are in compliance with all sound regulations, both from the town and ORES. As those studies become available, they will be included in the 94-c permit application.

9. Where is the proposed battery storage facility located in your plan?

It is going to be located next to the substation, which will be in the Northwest corner of the project area by the 230 kV line (adjacent to where the substation interconnects to the transmission line). Basically, the battery storage component is going to be looked at as part of the electrical infrastructure. It will only take up 1-2 acres of land and will essentially be part of the existing electrical infrastructure associated with the project substation and will be treated as such.

Battery storage is obviously a pretty new technology in New York, and we understand that. AES actually has a joint venture with a company called Fluence, which is the largest battery installer in the world. We're also looking at potential battery storage down in New York City, and there are some pretty strict safety standards when working with the New York City fire department. Because of AES' experience installing batteries we have very good connections with battery suppliers and are making sure that we've got state-of-the-art safety requirements in place.

10. Is there any federal funding associated with this project?

In some ways no, in some ways yes. For all renewable projects there is something called an investment tax credit, so a certain percentage of capital costs of the project receive a tax credit. On your tax return and in many times, which is what we would plan to do here, usually that tax credit is monetized through something called tax equity – it's a way to raise capital in order to

finance the project. There are no other means of federal funding or subsidies associated with this project in particular, the only sort of federal funding that would apply in this case would be related to the federal tax returns.

11. Will any new overhead electrical lines be constructed in support of this project? Will existing lines/poles increase in height? If so, please generally describe the height and location of the lines.

The layout or the building of this project has several different types of electrical connections and lines. All the panels are connected, and each series of panels and inverters are connected via an underground collection line. All those underground lines then connect to what we call our collection substation, which is right next to the point of interconnection (POI). 99.9% of those collection lines will wind up underground. If for some reason – geological, environmental, or regulatory – we have to go aboveground we might do so, but this is not what we like to do or plan to do. For O&M (Operations & Maintenance), it is better to have the collection lines underground.

In addition to the collection lines within the project area, at the substation there are transmission lines that we will be interconnecting to that are at a certain height, coming out of the substation. Our plug, if you will, is going to be going to be up in the air. We don't have on hand the measurement of exactly how many feet that transmission line is up in the air, but if you're in the area, you can take a drive by and you'll be able to see where they're at. We'll come out of the substation with a dead-end structure and run lines over to tap on to the existing lines at that height.

To summarize, within the project area, our goal is to have all the collection lines underground, and when you get to the substation, where the voltage of the electricity produced by the panels is raised to meet the grid voltage, we will be tapping into overhead transmission lines, and will be adding a short run of lines to connect from the substation to the actual transmission lines.

12. Isn't there someone on the team who can describe the general classes of hazardous substances associated with battery storage?

We don't have our battery storage team on the call tonight, but we have no issues reaching out to you and getting some information to you specifically on this topic, and we will also post that information on our website. We don't want to answer questions that we don't have answers to on this call.

It is important to note that we have not yet purchased the batteries we will be using, so we don't want to be premature in answering this question, as different batteries have different chemical makeups. For that reason, we can't accurately answer this question yet because we haven't purchased the batteries. We can confirm that the batteries will be lithium ion, which is a generally standard, accepted technology for battery storage. All the other chemical components of the batteries that could influence their potential environmental

impact, as well as the chemical makeup of the project's solar components, will be included in the permit application, which will be fully transparent and available for the public to review. If anything, we want to make sure everybody feels that we're being completely transparent. We will be glad to answer all these questions – we just want to get the right subject matter experts involved.

13. Is there a possibility for the Village electric lines to be buried in areas that are overlapping your buried lines?

As we run our collection lines underground from inverter to inverter and over to the collection substation, there is a chance we could be overlapping other underground lines, whether they be telephone, electric or gas lines. In that case, we would work to get crossing agreements, and we have a team of folks that will work on that. Those crossing agreements will consider different engineering tactics needed to safely make those crosses. We will work with the pertinent local entities, for example, if we do have to cross a village electric line, we will work with the village electric company to operate in compliance with their standards.