

Anderson I/II Solar Project
Part 3 Analysis Attachment
North Collins, NY
March 10, 2023

SEQR: FEA Additional Information

The following information supplements the Full Environmental Assessment Form (FEAF) to provide additional information for the Town to use in evaluating potential impacts arising from the solar energy facilities proposed by CleanChoice Energy at 12274 and 12276 Gowanda State Road in the Town of North Collins. This analysis is intended to facilitate a thorough review of the action in accordance with 6 NYCRR Part 617 State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). This analysis only addresses categories where there may be potential moderate to large impacts (or provides documentation as to why the impact is none to small), as identified in the Part 2 and the EAF Mapper.

Project Description and Action

The project is a ground-mounted solar energy system installation consisting of 28,500 modules, capable of producing 10 MW of power. The project is located on 61.5 acres of undeveloped land on two parcels totaling 125.6 acres at 12274 and 12276 Gowanda State Road in the Town of North Collins, Erie County. The modules are approximately 9 feet high when mounted. Activities will also include the installation of new electrical equipment and accessories including concrete pads for equipment and gravel access roads.

Impact on Land

There will be disturbance of land to install the solar arrays. There will be some excavation to install the mounting system. There is a high-water table on the site, with an average depth of 1.5 to 2 feet, but the racking systems will not have an impact on the groundwater given the relatively shallow depth required to install the racking system that supports the arrays. There is little to no removal of the trees on the site and there is a potential for erosion. However, during construction erosion and sediment controls will be implemented and **during operation, the site will be seeded to, among other things, stabilize the soil and prevent erosion.** The applicant will not be performing major grading to the site to install the solar panels (they will be set on the existing ground).

The project will be subject to an approved Stormwater Pollution Protection Plan (SWPPP). **Land under the panels will be reseeded, reducing the likelihood of erosion problems.** The project will not result in off-site erosion.

With these measures in place, no significant impacts to land are anticipated.

Impact on Water Resources (including both surface water and groundwater)

There are wetlands on the site. The applicant completed a wetland delineation and confirmed that the project does not require an Article 15 or Article 24 permit from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. **The applicant is still awaiting a response from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regarding federal jurisdiction of these wetlands.** If the wetlands are determined to be federal, the project will require a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers and the applicant will be required to comply with the conditions of such permit in accordance with federal law and regulations. The project site is not located in a FEMA floodplain or a Special Hazard Area.

Design of the project will be subject to a SWPPP and will be in accordance with a stormwater management system designed to prevent adverse impacts from the increase in impervious area for both quantity and quality. The site is characterized by poorly drained soils. The applicant has stated

no intent to use pesticides or herbicides. The site is not located over a principal aquifer, but **there is an aquifer to the north used by the Village of North Collins for their public water system**. Installation of the panels is not anticipated to have a significant impact on that resource given the relatively shallow depth required to install the racking system that supports the arrays.

The applicant has confirmed with the manufacturer of the solar panels that the panels, including any anti-glare coating, do not contain PFAS substances and, therefore, no impact to water resources is anticipated.

Based on the above, the project is not expected to result in any significant adverse impacts to water resources.

Impact on Plants and Animals

The applicant consulted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and obtained an official species list for the site. The official species list indicated the potential presence of the northern long-eared bat, which is threatened. The project does not involve the clearing of any forest or other habitat which would affect this species.

Based on the above, the project is not expected to result in any significant adverse impacts to plants and animals.

Impact on Agricultural Resources

The site is located in an Erie County State-certified Agricultural District. The site appears to have been farmed in the past, but **the applicant has stated that the site is not being presently farmed**.

The project will not result in increased development pressure or other pressures on agricultural lands.

The applicant has completed the notice of intent process with the Department of Agriculture and Markets in accordance with Agriculture and Markets Law § 305(4), The Department of Agriculture and Markets, based on consultation with the Department of Environmental Conservation, the Advisory Council on Agriculture, and the Erie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, has determined that the project will not have an unreasonably adverse effect on the continuing viability of farm enterprises within the County Agricultural District or State environmental plans, policies and objectives.

Based on the above, the project will not result in any significant adverse impacts to Agricultural Resources.

Impact on Historic and Archaeological Resources

The site is located in an archaeologically sensitive area. The applicants have submitted the project for review to NYSOPRHP (SHPO) through the Cultural Resource Information System (CRIS), which requested a Phase IA/IB archaeological survey.

Therefore, the project will not affect historic or archaeological resources.

Impact on Transportation

There will be some limited increase in truck visits to the site during the temporary construction period, as materials for the panels are brought to the site. The Town and other road jurisdiction agencies have not noted any particular impacts related to construction vehicles. After construction, the projects are unmanned and will generate very little traffic, except intermittently when solar company, landscaping and snow removal personnel travel to the site to perform ordinary and necessary maintenance.

Therefore, the project will not have a long-term impact on transportation in the area.

Impact on Noise, Odor, and Light

There may be some minor noise generated during the temporary construction period, but these will be temporary in nature and will not occur after sunset and prior to sunrise. During operation, there will be some noises from inverters on the site, but these inverters are located a great distance from neighboring homes and will not operate at night. For the proposed facility, the offsite house nearest to the inverters is located nearly 1000+ feet away. Based on the noise levels of the equipment of 70 to 75 decibels based on submitted information, the distance to the nearest receptor, and the surrounding vegetation, noise impacts will not be significant. There will be no odors or lighting impacts. Glare information has been submitted to document no impacts from glare.

Based on the above, the project will not result in any significant adverse impacts from Noise, Odor or Light.

Impact on Aesthetic Resources

There are no mapped or known federal, state or locally designated scenic or aesthetic resources in the area. Based on this, no impacts to aesthetic resources are anticipated.

Consistency with Community Character

The project will not replace or eliminate existing facilities, structures, or areas of historic importance to the community. It will not create a demand for additional community services, and it will not displace any affordable housing. The project will not interfere with the enjoyment of any designated public resource. The project will be inconsistent with the predominant scale, character, and natural landscape of the area. The use is allowed by SUP under the existing zoning, if shown to be in accordance with the solar law. Although the solar energy system is not consistent with the character of the area, including the existing natural landscape, the applicant, in accordance with the Town's Zoning Code, has placed and designed the system to minimize impacts, including visual impacts, to the area. The location, existing and proposed screening will help to minimize these impacts.

The project therefore will not result in any significant adverse impacts on Community character.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Environmental Resources Mapper
- Materials submitted by the Applicants: wetland study, SHPO correspondence, plans, etc.
- SEQR Correspondence