

PPRP Fact Sheet – Cherrywood Solar, Caroline County

PSC Case Number 9477

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Project Overview:

Cherrywood Solar I, LLC has filed for a CPCN to construct and operate a 202 MW solar array in Caroline County (Figure 1). The Project will occupy approximately 1,085 acres spanning 16 parcels located between the towns of Greensboro and Goldsboro. Project components include:

- 499,806 photovoltaic (PV) modules mounted on a single axis horizontal tracking racking system;
- 81 power centers with DC to AC power inverters, medium voltage transformers, and associated equipment;
- One new substation with associated switch gear;
- Underground interconnections, to include easements on four parcels in addition to the 16 Project parcels; and
- Other associated interconnection equipment.

The Application further indicates that a 20- to 30-acre battery storage installation is being evaluated as part of the Project. If this component is included, Cherrywood Solar will provide a supplemental filing with additional information.

Note: This fact sheet is based on information provided in the Cherrywood Solar CPCN Application and does not reflect State agency reviews.

Site Description

The Cherrywood Solar Project represents the largest proposed solar generating facility in the State of Maryland to date. The Project is divided into three sections.

- Upper Section – Six parcels totaling 506 acres, with a Project limit of disturbance (LOD) of 154 acres.
- Middle Section – Three parcels totaling 268 acres, with a Project LOD of 154 acres.
- Lower Section – Seven parcels totaling 1,146 acres, with a Project LOD of 634 acres.

All of the parcels included in the Project are zoned Rural (R) and all have agriculture as the existing property use. All three of the sections of the Project contain some portion of land that is considered Prime Farmland.

In addition to these three sections, four additional parcels are proposed to be used for interconnection easements. The underground interconnection will involve two crossings of Rt. 313; a 66-foot easement crossing under an abandoned railroad track; a right-of-way (ROW) to bury a line within a county-owned ROW; a directional drill section under a small, private lake; and another directional drill section under a Forest Stewardship Parcel.

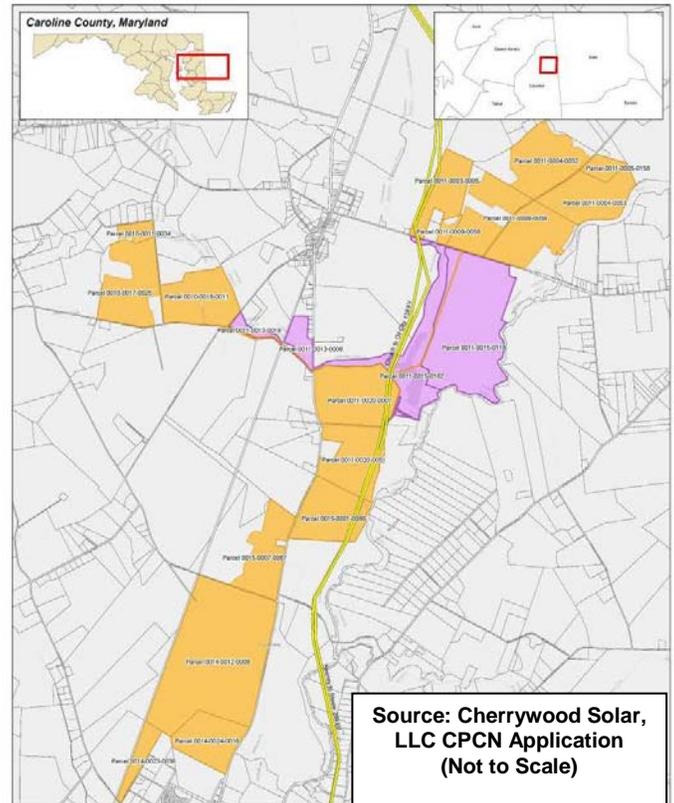
In December 2017, Caroline County adopted a Solar Ordinance. The Ordinance limits utility-scale solar projects to 2,000 acres of farmland and prohibits the development of utility-scale solar projects within County-designated growth areas. Additional constraints are comparable to licensing conditions recommended by PPRP for other solar projects (i.e. decommissioning plans, financial assurances, setbacks and screening, etc.).

Impact Assessment Highlights

Biological

- The Application indicates that the entire Project lies within the Choptank River watershed, but is not

Figure 1: Project Location



located within the Critical Area.

- The Application indicates that wetlands within the Project area have been identified and will be avoided with appropriate buffers and setbacks.
- The Application indicates that the Project meets Caroline County's "no net loss" criteria for the Forest Conservation Act (FCA). According to Cherrywood Solar, Caroline County has reviewed the Applicant's FCA worksheet and advised that no afforestation is required. Mitigation will be completed in accordance with County requirements to address the loss of the small number of individual trees that may be removed during construction.
- DNR's Natural Heritage Program reviewed the Project. There are records of two state-listed species in two parcels of the Upper Section. DNR found no records of protected species on the remaining sections; however, many of the parcels are located within drainage areas for wetlands or streams known to support protected species. The Application indicates that areas of concern for protected species are located within wetlands and woodlands on and around the Project or downstream waterways; these areas will be protected because forested areas will not be cleared and best management practices (BMPs) will be implemented during construction to prevent runoff and sediment transport offsite.

Economic and Fiscal

- The Applicant anticipates that the Project will create 250-350 temporary jobs.
- The Project represents a capital investment of approximately \$200 million.

Transportation

- Daily construction traffic will include cars, pickup trucks, and other personal vehicles. Excavation and other heavy equipment may include dump trucks, trenching equipment, concrete trucks, front loaders, backhoes, post installation equipment, excavators, etc.
- Once in operation, the Application indicates that traffic to the Project will be limited to quarterly to annual visits by maintenance crews and site inspectors.

Visual Impacts

- The Application indicates that there are 12 non-participating residences with line-of-sight to the Project that will require setbacks and landscape buffers.
- The Application states that the closest airports to the Project are Spiering Airport, Ridgely Airport, Marble Head Farm Airport, Carmean Airport, and Gary Field Airport. The Applicant performed glare hazard analysis for all of the airports; no glare was found for any of the subject observation points. The Applicant contacted the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and is awaiting confirmation that there are no aviation concerns.

Cultural & Aesthetic

- The Applicant has consulted with the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT), which responded and requested additional information from the Applicant.
- Six prehistoric archaeological sites were identified within the Project area.
- At least two early 19th century farmhouses (one razed and one still standing) are within the Project area. Aerial photographs and the 1875 atlas indicate that others may be present as well.
- A Phase I archaeological assessment is required for eight of the Project parcels.
- The Applicant must complete and submit to MHT Determination of Eligibility forms for 16 known locations and any other resources over 50 years old within the area of potential effect.
- Portions of the Project are adjacent to MD 313 and MD 287, which are part of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Scenic Byway.

CPCN Status

- CPCN Application filed on 1/23/18.
- The pre-hearing conference is scheduled for March 8, 2018 at the PSC.
- For more current information, see: <http://www.psc.state.md.us/>.