



# ELP Ticonderoga Solar

PRO 40729

Application # 237-01

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## Community Engagement Plan

*August 2024*



**PREPARED BY:**

**VC Renewables**

**14 Arrow Street, Suite 22**

**Cambridge, MA 02138**

**PROJECT CONTACT:**

**Wendy De Wolf, Senior Vice President**

**[wdw@vcrenewables.com](mailto:wdw@vcrenewables.com)**

**(201) 275-4859**

## Purpose

Community engagement is a key component in the successful siting and advancement of renewable energy projects in New York State. Throughout the development process, public participation plays an important role in informing an understanding of local interests and concerns and making recommendations relevant to project design and implementation. This input shapes outcomes and leads to improved projects.

This Community Engagement Plan (“Plan”) is intended to provide general information regarding the proposed project for public review. It demonstrates the types of public outreach efforts to be undertaken to inform community members and key stakeholders about the project, in the interest of supporting an inclusive process. This plan’s content and structure is designed to be consistent with the provisions for community engagement required of all projects participating in the Large-Scale Renewables program administered by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA).

## Company Background

VC Renewables is a US-based renewable energy company with extensive experience developing distributed- and utility-scale renewable energy projects across North America. VC Renewables’ platform combines the financial capability of Vitol, one of the world’s leading energy companies, with management expertise spanning all phases in the life of a renewable energy project: from permitting and development, to financing and construction, and asset management and ownership.

VC Renewables is committed to being a part of New York’s clean energy transformation and helping the State achieve its goal to source 70% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2030. The establishment of this Clean Energy Standard propelled New York State to the forefront of the nation in the fight to address climate change, reduce harmful air pollution, and ensure a diverse and reliable low-carbon energy supply. The VC Renewables team has operated many renewable energy projects in New York, and with a broad portfolio of additional projects under development in the state, we are deeply invested in the successful advancement of renewable energy in New York State.

## Project Description

ELP Ticonderoga Solar (the “Project”) is a 20-megawatt (MWac) solar photovoltaic facility, proposed on privately-owned property in the Town of Ticonderoga, Essex County, New York. The land is zoned light industrial and consists of a mix of fields, abandoned orchard, and forested land. The surrounding setting mainly consist of commercial farming and rural residential land.

The Project's location was chosen for its favorable interconnection to the transmission grid adjacent to the site, its lack of impact to active agricultural lands, its minimal impacts to threatened or endangered species habitat and other sensitive environmental resources, and the presence of sufficient land area to enable optimized design and efficient solar production. Additionally, due to historical pesticide use on the site, redevelopment and agricultural opportunities are limited whereas a solar facility can be safely built and operated.

The Project will interconnect to National Grid’s 115kV Ticonderoga-Republic Line 2, which transects the abutting parcel to the southeast. The Project has an executed interconnection agreement and has received all its required permits, including those from the Adirondack Park Agency and the Town of Ticonderoga.

The proposed Project facility will consist of the following components:

- **Solar photovoltaic (PV) panels** – Crystalline silicon PV panels, each approximately 3 feet by 8 feet and grouped into arrays, will produce direct current (DC) electricity.
- **Racking system** – The solar panels will be attached to a single-axis tracker racking system and secured into the ground by posts. The anticipated height of the panels and racking structure will be no more than 15 feet above existing grade at any given point.
- **Central inverters** - Inverters placed throughout the PV array will convert DC power produced by the solar panels in to utility-grade alternating current (AC) power.
- **Access roads** – Roads will be constructed into and within the PV array to allow safe and reliable access for construction, maintenance, and emergency services.
- **Fencing** - A security fence will enclose the PV array per electric code requirements. Agricultural-style fencing will be used (wooden posts with wire mesh).
- **Project substation** – Medium-voltage lines that collect the electric output from inverters and deliver it to the substation, which will transform the Project’s

electrical output up to the appropriate utility voltage (115kV) and establish the grid connection to the electric transmission lines that run adjacent to the property.

The Project has been designed to avoid and minimize potential impacts to the local viewshed, habitats, and other sensitive resources:

- **Viewshed** – The Project will be set back from the road and supplemented with vegetative screening as necessary to minimize visual impacts.
- **Threatened or endangered species habitat** – A thorough review of agency records, further supported by on-site habitat and species surveys, confirms that the Project will not result in impacts to endangered or threatened species.
- **Wetlands** – APA and federal wetlands have been delineated on the site and the Project has been designed to minimize any impacts to wetlands.
- **Agricultural resources** - The Project minimizes impacts to agricultural soils (MSG 1-4) and does not displace any active agricultural activities.

The Project has an executed interconnection agreement and has received all its required permits for construction, including those from the Adirondack Park Agency and the Town of Ticonderoga.

## Authorities Having Jurisdiction

The primary Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) for the Project is the Town of Ticonderoga. The Supervisor of the Town of Ticonderoga is Mark A. Wright. Mr. Wright was first elected in 2021 and then re-elected in 2023. His current term goes through the end of 2025 and his contact information is:

Supervisor Mark A. Wright  
132 Montcalm St, Ticonderoga, NY 12883  
[supervisor@townofticonderoga.org](mailto:supervisor@townofticonderoga.org)  
(518) 585-6265, x1

The Project was permitted by the Town's Planning Board, which is led by W. Doug McTyier. The Project's main point of contact with the Town is the Code Enforcement Officer, Dave Burrows, whose contact information is below:

Dave Burrows, Code Enforcement Officer  
132 Montcalm St, Ticonderoga, NY 12883  
dburrows@townofticonderoga.org  
(518) 585-9851

The taxing school district is the Ticonderoga Central School District. The Project's contact at the School District is Laurie Cossey, the Business Administrator, whose contact information is below:

Laurie Cossey, Business Administrator  
Ticonderoga Central School District  
5 Calkins Place  
Ticonderoga, NY 12883  
[lcossey@ticonderogak12.org](mailto:lcossey@ticonderogak12.org)  
(518) 585-7400 x1134

## Community Engagement

It is important that the public and interested stakeholders have opportunities to obtain information on the facility and participate in the proceedings that will guide its development, and that prospective concerns are incorporated into the project design.

Our outreach approach begins with proactive communication with representatives from the host community. In the early development phase of a project, typically following execution of landowner agreements, the development team contacts local officials to introduce a project concept, and exchange basic facts regarding solar technology, project construction and operation, and the local permitting context. Additional topics covered in introductory project meetings include strategies for environmental impact analysis and mitigation and appropriate channels for dissemination of project information to the public. A key goal of this initial consultation is to identify any fatal flaws or particular sensitivities that should inform our approach to community outreach and project design.

The development team first met with the Town Supervisor in May 2019 to discuss ELP Ticonderoga Solar. We introduced the proposed Project, its location and early design

details, while the Supervisor described the draft solar law, key issues of concern such as decommissioning, and the need for education about solar basics for local residents.

In June 2019, the Project hosted a public information session on solar energy at the Best Western in Ticonderoga, a public meeting space in close proximity to the proposed Project’s location. The event was advertised through the Chamber of Commerce and the posting of flyers in key locations throughout the community. As there were no existing solar projects in the greater Ticonderoga region at the time, we gave a presentation about solar energy, siting considerations, and frequently asked questions regarding solar technology and solar projects.

In July 2019, the development team attended the Town’s public hearing on the new solar law and listened to the residents’ feedback on solar. This meeting provided us with key insight into the community’s interests and concerns with regard to solar development. Public comment in the meeting cautioned the Town Board against over-regulation of private land-use so that any Town resident could realize the potential economic benefits of solar. Other comments addressed the potential for abandonment and how to ensure projects do not become eyesores in the Town. The Town agreed to add standard language to address decommissioning in the draft ordinance.

Throughout the Project’s permitting process, the Project maintained an active dialogue with the Town Supervisor, Town Planning Board, and community members. Beyond the Town of Ticonderoga, we actively engaged with other key stakeholders including the Adirondack Park Agency (APA), the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), the Adirondack Land Trust, the Adirondack Council, and the Essex County IDA.

Below is a summary of community engagement events, including planned frequency and duration.

Outreach Activity	Duration	Frequency
Comments and Inquiries	6 years	Continuous
Host Landowner Outreach	6 years	Continuous
Town Supervisor Meetings	6 years	As needed during permitting process and to provide project updates
Planning Board Meetings	4 year	Monthly during permitting process and as needed to provide project updates

Adjacent Landowner Outreach	6 years	Continuous
Project Informational Sessions	1 year	As needed during permitting process
APA Meetings	4 years	As needed during permitting process and to provide project updates
Meetings with Local Environmental Organizations (ALT and Adirondack Council)	6 years	Continuous
Meetings with Essex County IDA	4 years	As needed during PILOT discussions and to provide project updates

As the Project moves into construction, the Project intends to continue to support community engagement activities. The onsite construction manager will coordinate closely with the building inspector, neighbors, and other key local stakeholders. If stakeholders have any questions about the project construction, they can reach out to the onsite construction manager, who will then either address their question directly or connect them with the appropriate person on the Project team. Once Project construction is complete and the Project is operational, there will be signs on the Project’s perimeter fence indicating that the Project’s contact information.

## Agency Consultations

In addition to working with the host community, ELP Ticonderoga Solar has engaged affected agencies and other key stakeholders, as highlighted below:

- The Adirondack Park Agency
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation – Division of Historic Preservation (OPRHP)
- The Army Corps of Engineers
- New York State Department of Transportation
- Essex County IDA
- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
- New York State Independent Service Operator (NYISO)

## Community Benefits

In addition to serving as a source of locally produced clean energy, the community benefits associated with solar projects stem from increased economic activity locally through the project development, construction, and operation phases, long-term support for local services by way of property tax or PILOT payments, and economic benefit to local landowners hosting the projects.

The Project intends to utilize local contractors for the project's development, construction, and operation where practical and available. During the Project's development phase, the Project has worked with local surveying and engineering firms to design the project and prepare permitting materials. This includes boundary and topographic surveys, wetlands delineation, site-civil plans, and other engineering and environmental studies required by the AHJ and other affected agencies. During the Project's construction phase, the Project aims to employ local engineering consultants, civil contractors, solar laborers, and electrical contractors to build the facility.

During the Project's twenty-year life, the project will seek local contractors to support the facility's operation and maintenance. We will hire a ground maintenance contractor to maintain grass growth below 3 feet within the project fence line, maintain the screening trees, manage tree growth on the property to avoid shading of the panels, plow the driveways in the winter, and care for the gravel driveways. We will also employ solar technicians to perform routine inspections, maintenance, and repairs of the solar energy generating equipment and respond to unexpected interruptions in service.

One of the most tangible and lasting economic impacts to local jurisdictions from a solar power generation facility development are contributions to the tax base. In January 2022, ELP Ticonderoga Solar entered into a long-term payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) agreement with the Town of Ticonderoga, the Ticonderoga Central School District, and Essex County, which provides payments to local taxing jurisdictions once the project is operational. The ELP Ticonderoga Solar Project will be a new economic resource to the region, bringing renewed local investment and increased tax base.

An important part of New York State's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act is a commitment to ensuring the benefits of the state's energy transition flow to Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) as defined by the Climate Justice Working Group (CJWG). The state recognizes that significant economic benefits can be realized by DACs with the development and construction of renewable energy facilities.

While the Project is not located in a designated DAC, the project will be sourcing laborers from across the North Country Local's territory, which covers many counties and includes several disadvantaged communities. The closest disadvantaged communities are just north of the project, near Keesville and Plattsburgh.

VC Renewables is partnering with an organization in the Capital District, called the Social Enterprise and Training (SEAT) Center, which provides education and workforce experiences for disadvantaged youths in the Capital Region. We are working with the SEAT Center, along with The Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA), to develop a pilot program in solar construction training. Building off the SEAT Center's existing construction training program, we would provide curriculum materials, and support to adapt the program to a solar focus. To date, we have held two events to forward our partnership with the SEAT center. In September 2022, we coordinated a tour of the SEAT Center and the Local 157 training facilities. In November 2022, we coordinated a tour of LIUNA's training facility in Glenmont, along with a site visit to one of our community solar projects under construction in the capital district. In April 2023, LIUNA hosted SEAT Center students for a racking training session at their Glenmont facility, which we were able to attend as well. The goal of the program is to train students from disadvantaged communities for the growing renewable energy industry in New York.

## Conclusion

Effective Community Engagement reflects an understanding of local interests and concerns, provides high-quality well-timed public education opportunities, demonstrates a commitment to partnering with local officials in proposed host communities, respectfully responds to opposition, and elicits input from the public and affected agencies. This Community Engagement Plan is an important component of ELP Ticonderoga Solar's development process and success in achieving this objective. VC Renewables is excited by the opportunity to develop this Project in coordination with the various stakeholders discussed in this plan.

## Contact Us!

We encourage stakeholders to contact us with any questions or concerns you might have about the project. We can be reached at [wdw@vcrenewables.com](mailto:wdw@vcrenewables.com) or 201-275-4859.