



# Community Engagement Plan

Sugar Maple Solar

NYSERDA RESRFP24-1

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# Bid Facility Background

Sugar Maple Solar (the “Bid Facility”) is a proposed 125 megawatt (MW) solar photovoltaic electric generating facility proposed to be located in the Towns of Croghan and Wilna in Lewis and Jefferson Counties, New York. The Bid Facility area will span approximately 653 acres and plans to connect to the nearby Black River to Taylorville (NY) and N. Carthage to Taylorville 115kV lines

The Proposer is committed to the responsible development of renewable energy as a catalyst for long-term community benefit. The Bid Facility is anticipated to positively impact the environment by reducing carbon dioxide emissions by approximately 175,000 metric tons each year – the equivalent of powering a total of 38,000 homes per year. The development of Teele Solar will help New York State achieve the CLCPA mandate of a 100% carbon free electric grid by 2040. The Bid Facility will also provide benefits to the local economy by producing significant tax revenue and other economic benefits in the area.

## Article VIII Permit Application Status

Effective April 20, 2024, the Renewable Action Through Project Interconnection and Deployment (RAPID) Act repealed Executive Law 94-c and the NY Public Service Commission Article VII. The RAPID Act put into place the new Public Service Law Article VIII regime, under which permits for renewable energy generation and transmission will be issued by the Office of Renewable Energy Siting (ORES).

The Proposer is preparing to submit an Article VIII Siting Permit application at the end of November 2024. The Proposer has performed exhaustive permitting activities, and the majority of pre-application studies, reports, and determinations are complete. The remaining materials required for application submission will be completed by November 2024. The permit application requires a variety of environmental and engineering studies including but not limited to wetlands and surface waters, threatened and endangered species, cultural resources, and geotechnical studies. It is anticipated that the Final Siting Permit will be obtained in Q4 2025 or Q1 2026.

## Key Contacts

The Proposer has identified the following key contacts as of Q3 2024.

## Authorities Having Jurisdiction and Taxing School District

The Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) include the Towns of Wilna, in Jefferson County, NY, and the Town of Croghan, in Lewis County, NY. The taxing School Districts

are the Carthage Central School District (ID 3606630) and Beaver River Central School District (ID 3604200).

## Locally Elected Officials

The locally elected officials for the Town of Lisbon, New York are in the table below.

Name	Title and Office	Tenure	Contact	Address
<b>Larry F. Boliver</b>	Supervisor, Town of Croghan	Term in Office: 2 Years (01/01/24 - 12/31/25)	(315) 778 9027	9882 State Route 126 Suite A Castorland, NY 13620.
<b>Jonathan Roes</b>	Code Enforcement Officer, Town of Croghan	Hired Position: Perpetual term	(315) 377 2042	7760 North State Street Lowville, NY 13367
<b>Megan E. Simpson</b>	Tax Collector, Town of Croghan	Term in Office: 4 Years (01/01/24 - 12/31/27)	(315) 346 1212	9882 State Route 126 Suite A Castorland, NY 13620
<b>Megan E. Simpson</b>	Town Clerk, Town of Croghan	Term in Office: 2 Years (01/01/24 - 12/31/25)	(315) 346 1212	9882 State Route 126 Suite A Castorland, NY 13620
<b>Carol K. Monnat</b>	Town Justice, Town of Croghan	Term in Office: 4 Years (01/01/24 - 12/31/27)	(315) 346 1212	9882 State Route 126 Suite A Castorland, NY 13620
<b>Paul E. Smith</b>	Town Assessor, Town of Croghan	Term in Office: 6 Years (01/01/22 - 9/30/25)	(315) 346 1212	9882 State Route 126 Suite A Castorland, NY 13620
<b>Kevin Zehr</b>	Highway Superintendent, Town of Croghan	Term in Office: 4 Years (01/01/24 - 12/31/27)	(315) 346 6722	9882 State Route 126 Suite A Castorland, NY 13620
<b>Paul Smith</b>	Supervisor, Town of Wilna	Term in Office: 4 Years (01/01/22 - 12/31/25)	(315) 493 2771	414 State Street Carthage, NY 13619
<b>Terry McKeever</b>	Code Enforcement Officer, Town of Wilna	Term in Office: Perpetual	(315) 493 2771	414 State Street Carthage, NY 13619
<b>Lori Borland</b>	Tax Collector, Town of Wilna	Term in Office: 4 Years. (01/1/22 - 12/31/25)	(315) 493 2771	414 State Street Carthage, NY 13619
<b>Lori Borland</b>	Town Clerk, Town of Wilna	Term in Office: 4 Years (01/01/22 - 12/31/2025)	(315) 493 2771	414 State Street Carthage, NY 13619
<b>Faith Parks</b>	Town Justice, Town of Wilna	Term in Office: 4 Years (01/01/22 - 12/31/2025)	(315) 493 2890	120 S. Mechanic Street Carthage, NY 13619
<b>Robert Ball</b>	Town Assessor, Town of Wilna	Term in Office: 4 Year: (10/1/2022 - 09/30/2025)	(315) 493 2771	414 State Street Carthage, NY 13619
<b>Michael O'Shaughnessy</b>	Highway Superintendent, Town of Wilna	Term in Office: 4 Years (1/1/2022 - 12/31/2025)	(315) 493 3330	39767 NYS Route 3 Carthage, NY 13619
<b>Alan Mace</b>	County Assessor, Lewis County	Term in Office: Perpetual	(315) 376 5745	7660 North State Street Lowville, NY 13367

Name	Title and Office	Tenure	Contact	Address
<b>Cassandra Moser</b>	Auditor, Lewis County	Term in Office: 2 Years (01/01/2024 - 12/31/2025)	(315) 376 5356	7760 North State Street Lowville, NY 13367.
<b>Jake Moser</b>	County Clerk, Lewis County	Term in Office: 4 Years (1/1/2024 - 12/31/27)	(315) 376 5333	7660 North State Street Lowville, NY 13367
<b>Ryan Piche</b>	County Manager, Lewis County	Term in Office: 2 Years (01/01/2024 - 12/31/2025)	(315) 376 5354	7660 North State Street Lowville, NY 13367
<b>Joan McNichol</b>	County Attorney, Lewis County	Term in Office: 2 Years (01/01/2024 - 12/31/2025)	(315) 376 5282	7760 North State Street Lowville, NY 13367
<b>Eric Virkler</b>	Treasurer, Lewis County	Term in Office: 4 Years (1/1/2024 - 12/31/27)	(315)376 5325	7760 North State Steet Lowville, NY 13367
<b>Thomas Kalamas</b>	County Legislature, Lewis County	Term in Office: 2 Years (1/1/24 - 12/31/25)	<a href="mailto:tomkalamas@lewiscountyny.gov">tomkalamas@lewiscountyny.gov</a>	7760 North State Street Lowville, NY 13367
<b>Stefanie L. LaPier</b>	Auditor, Jefferson County	Term in Office: 2 Years (08/05/2024 - 12/31/25)	(315) 785 3386	7760 North State Street Lowville, NY 13367
<b>Gizelle J. Meeks</b>	County Clerk, Jefferson County	Term in Office: TBD	(315) 785 3312	175 Arsenal Street Watertown, New York 13601
<b>David J. Paulsen</b>	County Attorney, Jefferson County	Term in Office: 2 Years (1/1/24 - 12/31/25)	(315) 785 3088	175 Arsenal Street Watertown, New York 13601
<b>Brian S. Peck</b>	Treasurer, Jefferson County	Term in Office: 4 Years (1/1/2024 - 12/31/27)	(315) 785 3056	175 Arsenal Street Watertown, New York 13601

## Emergency Responders

Fire departments and emergency responders serving parcels in the Bid Facility Area were identified by review of county tax maps and online research. Details are listed below.

Department	Contact	Address
<b>Brian Draper</b> Fire Chief Carthage Fire Department	(315) 493 2346 <a href="mailto:Bdraper101@gmail.com">Bdraper101@gmail.com</a>	685 S James St, Carthage, NY 13619
<b>Gary Ashline</b> Fire Chief Castorland Fire Department	(315) 376 2511 <a href="mailto:Castolandfd@yahoo.com">Castolandfd@yahoo.com</a>	5187 NY-410 Castorland, NY 13620
<b>Jason P. Omeara</b> Fire Chief Natural Bridge Fire Company	(315) 644 9898 <a href="mailto:Jaytec31@verizon.net">Jaytec31@verizon.net</a>	27570 High Street Natural Bridge, NY 13665

Department	Contact	Address
<b>Rob Shultz</b> Fire Chief Croghan Volunteer Fire Department	(315) 376 2511 <a href="mailto:Rshultz@croghanfiredept.net">Rshultz@croghanfiredept.net</a>	6860 Fire Hall Street Croghan, NY 13327

## Outreach Strategies and Activities

The Proposer has made outreach efforts to engage with the local community and stakeholders. These efforts include regular communication with local officials and attendance at Town Board meetings. The Proposer solicits feedback from local stakeholders, demonstrating a commitment to transparency and open communication throughout the development process.

### Description of Stakeholder List

The stakeholder list includes a variety of individuals and parties with interest in the Bid Facility. The host communities are the Towns of Wilna and Croghan. The Town Boards representing the host communities have been identified. Points of contact (POC) will be the Town Supervisors and the Town Clerks.

Prior to submitting the Article VIII permit application, projects are required to consult with the local agencies and stakeholders of the communities in which the proposed Bid Facility will be located. ORES also requires that state agencies are consulted regarding certain environmental impacts.

### Community Members

Community members include participating and adjacent landowners, community members within a 1-mile radius of the boundaries of the Bid Facility, the local school districts, the towns, counties, and state agencies who are expected to take part or have interest in the Bid Facility.

### Local Agencies

Local affected agencies are also stakeholders. The Proposer has been in contact with local agencies, following Article VIII regulations. These groups include officials from the Towns of Croghan and Wilna, Jefferson County and Lewis County, New York State (NYS) officials, local first responders and fire departments, utility providers, and local interest groups.

Throughout the Article VIII permitting process, the Proposer has consulted with state agencies including ORES, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM), and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (NYSOPRHP).

The Proposer has also engaged in outreach with local stakeholder groups including the Adirondack North Country Association, North Country Chamber of Commerce, Carthage Chamber of Commerce, Railway Historical Society of Northern NY, Jefferson-Lewis Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), Adams Revitalization Committee, Beaver Falls Fire Department, Lewis County Search and Rescue, United Way of Watertown, Croghan Fire Department, Adirondack Foothills Cycling Club, and Castorland Fire Department.

## Methods of Communication

The Proposer utilizes a variety of communication channels to disseminate information about the Bid Facility, including the Bid Facility website, mailed notifications, and notices in local papers. Additionally, the Proposer asks the towns to post key Bid Facility information on their websites. Permit application materials will be made available at key locations in the host communities, per Article VIII regulations.

The Proposer consistently meets Article VIII communication requirements regarding public meeting notifications, notifications about key Bid Facility milestones, and status of the Article VIII application. A mailing list has been developed that includes the stakeholders listed above, as well as additional addresses solicited from community meetings and the Bid Facility website. Bid Facility updates will continue to be shared on the Bid Facility website throughout the Article VIII permitting process. Community meeting materials, such as slide presentations and Q&As, are also available on the Bid Facility website.

<b>Bid Facility Website</b>	<a href="https://www.aes.com/new-york/project/sugar-maple-solar-project">https://www.aes.com/new-york/project/sugar-maple-solar-project</a>
<b>Bid Facility Email</b>	<a href="mailto:SugarMapleSolar@aes.com">SugarMapleSolar@aes.com</a>
<b>Croghan Town Board Website</b>	<a href="http://townofcroghan.com/">townofcroghan.com/</a>
<b>Wilna Town Board Website</b>	<a href="http://wilna.racog.org/">wilna.racog.org/</a>

## Outreach Efforts – Pre-Award and Development

In addition to regular communication with local officials in the host community, the Proposer has conducted community engagement and outreach events for the Bid Facility in accordance with Article VIII regulations. Some of these outreach efforts are described below.

Date	Community and Stakeholder Engagement Event
<p><b>June 13, 2024</b></p>	<p><b>Local Agency Meeting</b></p> <p>Presenters and Attendees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jack Donelan – Project Development Manager</li> <li>• Diana Boylan - Associate Project Developer</li> <li>• Nathan Suttmeier – Senior Project Engineer</li> <li>• Liza Norment – Manager, Permitting</li> <li>• Neely Kelley - Senior Stakeholder Relations Manager</li> <li>• Samantha Kranes - New York Area Operations Manager, TRC Companies</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Presentation boards available on project website.</a></p>
<p><b>June 18, 2024</b></p>	<p><b>In Person Community Meeting</b></p> <p>Presenters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jack Donelan – Project Development Manager</li> <li>• Diana Boylan - Associate Project Developer</li> <li>• Nathan Suttmeier – Senior Project Engineer</li> <li>• Liza Norment – Manager, Permitting</li> <li>• Neely Kelley - Senior Stakeholder Relations Manager</li> <li>• Ryan Snow – Project Manager, Natural Resource Lead, TRC</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Presentation boards available on project website.</a></p>
<p><b>May 2024</b></p>	<p><b>Croghan Board Meeting</b></p> <p>Presenters and Attendees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jack Donelan – Project Development Manager</li> </ul>
<p><b>April 8, 2021</b></p>	<p><b>April 2021 Virtual Community Meeting</b></p> <p>Presenters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Michael Farrell – Senior Manager</li> <li>• Brett Hastings – Senior Manager</li> <li>• Eric Will – Senio Manager</li> <li>• Jim Muscato – Permitting Counsel</li> <li>• Hayley Effler – Environmental Permitting Project Manager, TRC Companies</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Presentation boards available on project website.</a></p>

## Community Engagement Event Details

Community engagement events offer opportunities for the Proposer to meet with local stakeholders. The purpose of community meetings is to introduce AES and the Bid Facility, inform the community about the Article VIII permitting process, present next steps in the Bid Facility development, and inform the community on ways to get involved. The Proposer notifies stakeholders about community engagement events in accordance with the Article VIII regulations.

The Proposer continues to engage with stakeholders, including groups and individuals with a potential interest in the Bid Facility. Continued consultation with stakeholders allows for open dialogue and the frequent distribution of information related to the Bid Facility. Throughout the development of the Bid Facility, the Proposer will continue to make consistent effort to ensure community members have the opportunity to

communicate concerns and ask questions regarding the Bid Facility and its impact on the community.

### June 2024

In June AES hosted both a community meeting and a local agency meeting to answer project related questions and to inform members of the local municipality, as well as residents and community members, about the status of the Sugar Maple Solar project. A robust presentation entailing key milestones and significant aspects of the project life cycle was shared at both meetings. Key AES project team members attended both the meetings.

Over 4,000 mailed invites were sent three weeks prior to the community meeting to ensure public awareness and knowledge of the meeting. Invitations were sent to community members within a 1-mile radius of the Bid Facility. Three weeks ahead of the meeting, notice of the meeting was published in local newspaper publications like the Thousand Island Suns, Lowville Journal and Republican, Northern NY Pennysaver, Watertown Daily Times, and Boonville Herald.

The meeting notice was also posted on the Bid Facility website and Town Board websites.

### April 2021

On April 8, 2021, the Proposer held a Virtual Community Meeting. The virtual meeting was an opportunity for the Proposer to provide updates to the community on the preliminary Bid Facility layout, timeline, and economic benefits and to solicit community input.

The meeting included a Q&A session. Community members raised questions regarding labor and construction, impacts to endangered species, and the involvement of stakeholders. A full summary of questions and the Proposer's subsequent answers are available on the Bid Facility website.

## Notification of Community Events

In advance of community engagement events, notice is provided in compliance with the Article VIII permitting regulations. Meeting notifications are mailed to stakeholders, including all host and adjacent landowners and community members, within a 1-mile radius of the Bid Facility. The meeting details are posted on the Bid Facility website, the Town Board websites, and shared in local news publications. Local agencies are also invited to attend events.

The following agencies and organizations are invited to attend community events; officials of the Town of Croghan, Town of Wilna, Jefferson County, and Lewis County. Notices are addressed to the full Town Boards, care of the POCs and the appropriate Clerks, with language stating the expectation that the notices and information should be

distributed to the full board. The Proposer also provides notices to each member of the State Legislature whose district lies within any portion of the proposed Bid Facility area. Additionally, invites are mailed to the local fire departments, adjacent municipalities, and utility providers.

## Outreach Strategies – Construction

The Proposer will continue community outreach and engagement during the Bid Facility's construction phase. In consideration of the local host community and the temporary disruption caused by construction, the Proposer is receptive to hosting a local Construction Open House to inform the community about what to expect during the construction phase.

The Proposer will abide by the Article VIII regulations to develop and implement a Complaint Management Plan during the construction phase. At a minimum, the Complaint Management Plan shall describe the following:

- Methods for registering a complaint, which shall include a phone number, email address, mailing address, and a form to report complaints;
- Notification to the public of the complaint procedures;
- Process for responding to and resolving complaints in a consistent, timely, and respectful manner;
- Logging and tracking of all complaints received and resolutions achieved, with records of the following for each complaint containing:
  - The name and contact information of the person filing the complaint;
  - Location and owner of the property where the complaint originated;
  - Date and time of the underlying event causing the complaint;
  - Description of the complaint; and
  - Current status and description of measures taken to resolve complaints.
- Reporting to the Office and the New York State Department of Public Service (NYSDPS) any complaints not resolved within 30 days of receipt;
- Mediating complaints not resolved within 60 days; and
- Providing annual reports of complaint resolution tracking to the Office staff and NYSDPS staff, which shall also be filed with the Executive Director of the Office and Secretary of the NYSDPS.

Through these engagement tactics, the Proposer will ensure that stakeholders have appropriate recourse to learn and share feedback about the Bid Facility's construction phase.

## Outreach Strategies – Operations

The Proposer will make reasonable efforts to keep the community informed about the Bid Facility throughout all phases. During operation there will be signage posted at the Bid Facility with AES contact information. Signage will also include the number to call in the event of an emergency.

## Climate Act Goals and Benefits for Disadvantaged Communities

The Climate Act requires the state to invest or direct resources in a manner designed to ensure that disadvantaged communities receive at least 35%, with the goal of 40%, of overall benefits of spending on:

- Clean energy and energy efficiency programs
- Projects or investments in the areas of housing, workforce development, pollution reduction, low-income energy assistance, energy, transportation, and economic development

During the development and construction of our 2+ GW renewable energy portfolio in New York, AES intends to continue growing our Social Impact program for the state. The funds allocated for this program will be distributed among host communities, regions, and disadvantaged communities during development and construction.

## Social Impact Program

To support host communities during the development and construction of our renewable energy projects, including the Bid Facility, AES launched its Social Impact Program in New York State in 2021.

Through the Social Impact Program, the AES team collaborates with community leaders from government, business, education, social services, and residents to identify opportunities where AES can provide financial support and other types of support to high-impact initiatives, programs, and institutions that enjoy broad support in the community. AES has developed these four focus pillars from the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

1. Partnering for access to Safe, Efficient, and Affordable Energy and Basic Services
2. Partnering for Inclusive Economic Growth & Education
3. Partnering for the Environment
4. Partnering for Community Resilience

Within these pillars, the Social Impact Program strives to create partnerships that align with AES' purpose and values while strengthening AES' investment in community-led initiatives that meet the targets set forth by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and American Clean Power's Energy Transition for All initiative. These targets and goals closely align with the Climate Act's goals for disadvantaged communities.

## Social Impact Spending in Disadvantaged Communities

To date, more than 40% of overall AES Social Impact Program funding in New York has been invested in communities that meet the criteria for disadvantaged communities. Per the Justice Working Group Draft Criteria, 15% of residents in Northern New York live in a disadvantaged community. AES understands the need for investing in workforce development in and around disadvantaged communities. Through our Social Impact Program, we have partnered with the following organizations:

- Genesee Community College, Solar Electrical Technician Certificate Program: 2021 - 2022
- Franklin Essex Hamilton Board of Cooperative Education Services (FEH BOCES): 2022
- International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) 910 Apprenticeship Program: 2023
- The United Way of Northern New York - Bridges Out of Poverty Program: 2023
- Solar One, Green Workforce Program, New York City: 2023 and 2024

## Regional Workforce Development

AES continues to invest in high impact and meaningful workforce development initiatives in the North Country. For example, an AES representative has participated in the Electrical Trades Consultant Committee of the Franklin-Essex-Hamilton (FEH) BOCES, based in Malone, since October 2022. In this role, the AES representative has been able to shape the program and curriculum and best prepare students for careers in the renewable energy industry.

### Clean Energy Career Fairs

AES recognizes the importance of sponsoring and attending local career and job fairs, especially in those held in disadvantaged communities. The Proposer commits to support a minimum of one career fair event held in the Bid Facility region on an annual basis throughout the development lifespan (up to project commercial operation).

## Plans for Public Engagement

Community outreach will continue on an ongoing basis during the development, construction, and operation phases of the Bid Facility. The Proposer has a robust plan to provide stakeholders with continued access to Bid Facility representatives to ensure there are numerous opportunities for community input.

The Bid Facility website provides the designated Bid Facility email address, a New York phone number, and information about weekly office hours.

## Direct Benefits to the Community

AES’ New York Social Impact Program is designed to support host communities during the development and construction of our renewable energy projects, including Sugar Maple Solar.

During development and construction of the Bid Facility, the Proposer will continue Social Impact funding across New York State, in the critical areas of clean energy and energy efficiency programs, investments in the areas of housing, workforce development, pollution reduction, low-income energy assistance, energy, transportation, and economic development.

### Local Partnerships and Memberships

AES’ presence in the Jefferson and Lewis Counties has led to partnerships among the community with the following groups:

- Town of Lowville Summer Recreation Program (2024)
- Lewis County Search and Rescue (2024)
- Town of Adams Community Park (2024)
- Railway Historical Society of Northern New York (2023)
- Beaver Falls Fire Department (2023)
- United Way of Watertown – Bridges Out of Poverty Program (2023)
- Jefferson County Workforce Development Board (2023)
- Croghan Fire Department (2023)
- Castorland Fire Department (2023)

## Community Economic Benefits

### Payment in Lieu of Taxes and Host Community Agreement

The Proposer expects to execute a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreement, under which the Proposer will pay annual PILOT payments to each taxing jurisdiction. The terms of the PILOT agreement have not yet been finalized. The Proposer also expects to execute a Host Community Agreement (HCA) with the host municipalities, which will funnel additional funds directly into the local community.

### Utility Bill Credits

The Bid Facility will also provide the residents of the Towns of Wilna and Croghan with electric utility bill credits for the first 10 years of its operation. The credits will total \$62,500 annually, based on a rate of \$500 per megawatt of capacity, over the 10-year period. In total, \$625,000 will be provided in utility bill credits.

## Balancing Stakeholder Interests

The Proposer has conducted stakeholder outreach throughout the development of the Bid Facility. These efforts include community meetings, engagement with organizations important to the community, and social impact partnerships. Information is also available to the community via the Bid Facility website. These outreach efforts have ensured community participation during the Bid Facility's development.

### Building Stakeholder Support

The Bid Facility's success depends on continuing a strong relationship with the Croghan and Wilna Town Boards and communities. The Proposer has taken and will continue to take the appropriate steps to ensure the community is aware of and participates in the planning, development, construction, and operation of the Bid Facility. Our desire is to be sensitive to local concerns and to build a final Bid Facility that the community is proud of.

### Response to Community Concerns

The Proposer has worked in cooperation with the community throughout the development of the Bid Facility. The Bid Facility takes into consideration concerns raised by the community and has incorporated solutions to respond accordingly.

Our community engagement philosophy is to create a solid foundation at the local level and build additional layers of support at the regional and state levels. The Proposer will continue this outreach during development and is committed to responding respectfully to community feedback and concerns.

## Mitigating Concerns from Stakeholders

Throughout the development of the Bid Facility, the Proposer is committed to listening to, understanding, receiving feedback, and responding appropriately to the public and local community's concerns. The Proposer has a long history of working with participating and non-participating landowners of the Bid Facility. While Bid Facility updates are being shared throughout the Article VIII application process, the Proposer is committed to collaborating with stakeholders to mitigate any of their concerns related to the Bid Facility.

The Proposer has conducted surveys and studies for the Bid Facility, as required by the Article VIII permitting process. These studies assess and measure environmental and community impacts and identify potential opportunities for avoidance and mitigation.

The Proposer will use a variety of fencing, screening, setbacks, and landscaping to preserve existing viewsheds, minimize social and environmental impacts, and maintain the rural character of the area surrounding the Bid Facility.

The Bid Facility will have a decommissioning plan that includes a financial security to ensure that the Proposer can cover the cost of removing the infrastructure at the end of the Bid Facility’s life.

## Community Questions and Answers

Throughout development, the Proposer meets with the host community to solicit feedback and input. Listed below are some of the concerns that have been raised by the host community and how the Proposer has responded. More community questions and responses from the proposer can be found have been posted and can be found on the Bid Facility website.

Question	Answer
<p><b>1. What about the substantial number of geese that use these fields during the fall and spring?</b></p>	<p>Migratory birds will still be able to utilize these fields in the areas where panels are not placed. In addition, there will be significant spaces between the panels – while they are contiguous, they are not all in the exact same area, so there will be spaces between the areas of installed panels that geese can continue to utilize in the migratory season. The project will not block areas completely for their use.</p>
<p><b>2. How close will these panels be located to my property line?</b></p>	<p>We will follow the 100-foot setback from non-participating residential property lines, as applied by the 94-c permitting process. We will also be implementing a landscaping plan to provide visual screening and reduce the visual impact of this project.</p>
<p><b>3. What is the drilling being done in the fields around my home this week?</b></p>	<p>This drilling is temporary and is being conducted in an effort to understand what the subsurface soil conditions are in this area, so that we best understand how we are going to put in the foundations (piles) for this project. The racking systems for the solar panels in this project are called piles, and they are I-beams that get driven into the ground. This drilling that is currently taking place is helping us to understand how far underground these piles need to be driven – whether that is 8, 10, 12 feet or more. This drilling consists of some soil borings and driving of piles into the soil, as well as pile load testing where the piles are moved in various directions and then pulled out.</p>
<p><b>4. What if our house sits on a hill and trees would have to be forty feet tall to block the glare?</b></p>	<p>As mentioned previously, we will be conducting a glare analysis for the project, but solar panels do not produce much glare, as they have a very anti-reflective coating which helps them absorb light better. They are designed to absorb light, rather than reflect it. Additionally, though we do not yet have a full landscaping plan for this project, we will be implementing landscaping/vegetative buffering where appropriate, based on the setting and our visual impact analyses.</p>

## Feedback Solicitation

This Community Engagement Plan has been designed to ensure stakeholders' participation in the Bid Facility lifespan. The Proposer has described explicit methods through which feedback is being solicited and incorporated into ongoing Bid Facility development. In summary, the Proposer:

- Organizes community meetings; two have been organized thus far
- Solicits input on the Bid Facility website
- Monitors the Bid Facility email Monday through Friday 8am to 5pm

The Proposer is committed to sharing feedback, publicly when required, when asked, and/or when it is appropriate to do so.

Additionally, the Proposer follows Article VIII regulations for responding to public comment. Public comments are posted on the New York State Department of Public Service Document Matter Master (NYS DPS DMM).