



## ELP Granby Solar II

PRO 39757

Application # 228-03

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## Community Engagement Plan

*January 2024*



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## 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 already operates 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 Granby Solar II (the “Project”) is a 20-megawatt (MWac) solar photovoltaic facility, proposed on privately-owned property in the Town of Granby in Oswego County, New York.

The project’s location was chosen for (1) its favorable interconnection to the transmission grid on-site, (2) its minimal environmental impacts as the site design avoids wetland and other sensitive ecological resources; (3) the presence of sufficient land area to enable optimized design and efficient solar production; and (4) the opportunity presented for agricultural co-utilization.

The project site is bounded by County Route 55 (Jacksonville Road) to the east, and Merrit Road to the west. The proposed point of interconnection (POI) is to National Grid’s Curtis St - Teall 115kV line, which transects the project site.

The project site is situated in a rural agricultural area characterized by a mix of woodland, pasture and rural residences. The project’s array area will be sited primarily on pasture with minimal clearing required, and the project has been designed to allow for co-utilization of the land within the array area for continued agricultural use. As part of the co-utilization effort a grazing plan has been developed in conjunction with one of the project’s landowners and Agrivoltaic Solutions a leading agrivoltaics consultant in New York.

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.
- **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 collection lines that collect the electric output from inverters and deliver it to the substation that will transform the Project's electrical output up to the appropriate utility voltage (115kV) and establish the grid connection to the transmission lines that transect the property.

The project has been designed to avoid and minimize potential impacts to wetlands, threatened or endangered species, and other sensitive resources:

- **Wetlands** - The project completed a wetlands delineation in September 2023 and has been designed to avoid all NYSDEC wetlands, including the 100-foot buffer, and minimally impact federal wetlands.
- **Threatened and Endangered Species** – Based on agency mapping and jurisdictional inquiries, the only threatened or endangered species that might find habitat on the site is Indiana Bat. Impacts to Indiana Bats can be easily avoided by maintaining an April 1 to October 31 clearing restriction during construction.
- **Cultural, Historic, and Archeological Resources** – The project submitted a consultation to SHPO through CRIS in October 2023. It was determined that no archeological investigations were required. A historic resource survey was requested by SHPO. The project's consultant, Hartgen Archeological Associates, completed the survey in January 2024. Two potentially eligible properties were identified in the 0.5 miles zone of visual impact of the project but it was determined that both were sufficiently distant from the project to be minimally visually impacted.

## Authorities Having Jurisdiction

The primary Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) for the Project is the Town of Granby, whose Town Supervisor is John Snow, 820 County Route 8, Fulton, NY 13069, [jsnow@granbynny.com](mailto:jsnow@granbynny.com), (315) 598-6500, x223. Mr. Snow was re-elected in November 2023 and his current term runs through the end of 2027. The taxing school districts are the Phoenix Central School District and the Hannibal Central School District. Town of Granby local elected officials, contact information, and tenure are listed below:

### Town Board

- John Snow (Town Supervisor) – *term expires 12/31/27*
- Eric Clothier (Councilor) – *term expires 12/31/27*
- Crystal English (Councilor) – *term expires 12/31/27*
- Sandy Farrands (Councilor) – *term expires 12/31/25*
- Marianne Ingerson (Councilor) – *term expires 12/31/25*

### Planning Board

- Jane Crego (Chair)
- Rhonda Nipper (Member)
- Carl Nysten (Member)
- David Crockford (Member)
- Erin Palmitese (Member)
- Thomas Anthony (Member)
- Lori Blackburn (Member)

The Town of Granby adopted a local solar law in July 2020, with the intent of accommodating solar energy systems as an environmentally friendly alternative source of energy, allowing solar facilities in all zoning districts by Special Permit with Site Plan Review. The project submitted an application to the Planning Board in December 2023 and appeared for its first meeting in January 2024. The Town Planning Board indicated its intent to declare lead agency at the next meeting as the Town Attorney was not present at the January meeting.

## 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.

Following execution of site control with Project landowners, the development team for ELP Granby Solar II first met with the Town Supervisor in October 2022 to introduce the project. Project representatives discussed the proposed array, its location and key design details. Feedback from the meeting was positive and encouraging of the project's submission for Planning Board review under the provisions of the solar law. The Supervisor's initial view was that the proposed project fit well within the Town's regulations and that the proposed project will help to spur economic activity locally within the Town and County. The project has followed up with regular updates since that first meeting.

A full permitting application for the project was submitted in December 2023 for the January 2024 Granby Planning Board Meeting. At the meeting, board members provided generally positive feedback on the project's location and design.

Going forward, the project intends to continue to support community engagement activities, through future public permitting meetings in front of the AHJ as well as additional informational sessions, to support continued engagement and transparency as the project proposal continues to evolve and be refined.

Outreach Activity	Duration	Frequency
Comments and Inquiries	2 years	Continuous
Host Landowner Outreach	2 years	Continuous
Township Supervisor Meetings	2 years	Continuous
Planning Commission Meetings	1 year	Continuous
Adjacent Landowner Outreach	2 years	Continuous
Project Informational Sessions	1 year	As needed

If the project secures approvals and is put into construction, 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 initial outreach within the host community, ELP Granby Solar II has engaged affected agencies and other key stakeholders, as described below:

- **New York State Department of Environmental Conservation**
  - A wetlands delineation was conducted on the site in September 2023, confirming that the site contains both NYSDEC and federal wetlands. The report was submitted to the NYSDEC (as well as the US Army Corps of Engineers) in November 2023 and a site visit with the agency staff to review the delineation will be scheduled in the spring. The project has been designed to for minimal impact to all NYSDEC and federal wetlands.
  - The DEC also responded to the project's jurisdictional inquiry request in May 2022, outlining the key permitting considerations for the project. The letter and the environmental assessment form mapper both indicate that the only threatened or endangered species that might find habitat on the site is Indiana Bat. Impacts to Indiana Bats will be avoided by maintaining an April 1 to October 31 clearing restriction during project construction. No

other endangered or threatened species surveys are planned for the site given the feedback from the DEC and desktop resource review.

- **New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation – Division of Historic Preservation (OPRHP)**
  - A consultation was submitted through the Cultural Resource Information System (CRIS) in October 2023. It was determined that no archeological investigations were required. A historic resource survey was requested by SHPO. The project’s consultant, Hartgen Archeological Associates, completed the survey in January 2024. Two potential properties were identified in the 0.5 miles zone of visual impact of the project but it was determined that both were sufficiently distant from the project to be minimally visually impacted.
  
- **New York State Independent Service Operator (NYISO)**
  - The project submitted its interconnection application to NYISO in February 2022 and consistent with NYISO procedures the project has performed level in-depth analyses confirming the feasibility of the project’s interconnection and estimating the associated costs. The project anticipates completing its interconnection study work with NYISO in 2024.

## 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 payments, and economic benefit to local landowners hosting the projects.

VC Renewables 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 will aim 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 employ local contractors to support the facility's operation and maintenance. We will hire a ground maintenance contractor to 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. The project plans to work with a local sheep farmer to manage vegetation growth on the site.

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. The project intends to engage discussions with the Town of Granby and local taxing jurisdictions, regarding a long-term payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) agreement, which would provide payments to local taxing jurisdictions. The project's PILOT will provide direct economic benefit to the Town of Granby, its local school districts, and Oswego County. The ELP Granby Solar II project will be a new economic resource to the region, bringing renewed local investment and increased tax base in addition to serving as a significant clean energy source for the region.

Finally, 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.

The project site is located in a disadvantaged community in Oswego County. In this way, the project provides direct benefits to a disadvantaged community through the landowner lease payments, who live on the property. The project intends to employ local subcontractors and source laborers from this disadvantaged community as well as other nearby disadvantaged communities in Oswego, Onondaga, and Cayuga Counties. As the project approaches construction, it will be seeking a partnership with a workforce development agency in Oswego County such as the Oswego County Workforce New York Career Center or nearby YouthBuild programs in Rochester and Utica. Furthermore, the project's PILOT will provide support to the disadvantaged communities in Granby,

Oswego County, and the students from disadvantaged communities in the Hannibal and Phoenix Central School District.

## 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

ELP Granby Solar II has the opportunity to play part in New York's vision to address climate change, reduce harmful air pollution, and ensure a diverse and reliable low-carbon energy supply. This Community Engagement Plan is an important component of the project'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.