

NYSERDA RFP No. RESRFP23-1 Community Engagement Plan

*Submitted by:
Trelina Solar Energy Center, LLC*

Trelina Solar Energy Center, LLC is pleased to submit its Community Engagement Plan consistent with Section 4.3.8 of the RESRFP23-1. Proposers must provide a complete Community Outreach Plan associated with the Bid Facility, as described below.

1) Identify the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) and taxing School District, including local elected officials' names, contact information and tenure.

The Trelina Solar Energy Center ("Trelina Solar") is proposed in the Town of Waterloo in Seneca County and is located within the Waterloo Central School District. Town supervisor contact information is provided below:

- Town of Waterloo Supervisor: Don Trout
 - Contact:
 - Address: 1530 Jefferson Rd, 66 Virginia Street, Waterloo NY 13165
 - Email: d-trout@live.com
 - Phone: 315-539-9331
 - Tenure: Elected November 2015

4) Detail outreach strategies and activities the Proposer has implemented to date and will use to engage stakeholders and interested parties, including affected agencies, and to encourage public involvement throughout the pre-award, development, construction, and operation phases (consistent with the Project Milestone Schedule), including methods of communication and specific channels the Proposer intends to use to disseminate Bid Facility information.

Trelina Solar conducted extensive stakeholder outreach and community engagement throughout the Article 10 review process that culminated in the issuance of a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need from the New York State Board on Electric Generation Siting and the Environment. A Public Involvement Program (PIP) Plan was developed during the project's pre-application phase in May 2019. The overall objective of the PIP Plan is to engage with all stakeholders in order to understand their varied interests and concerns as they relate to the project, to seek their input and to gather specific, objective information that was utilized to inform the detailed study plans, and to explain methods Trelina Solar Energy Center uses to keep stakeholders informed throughout the entire Article 10 process. The full PIP Plan can be found on the [Trelina Solar Energy Center DMM](#) page (Final PIP posted on 07/12/2019 with a supplement filed 05/21/2020).

Elements of the Trelina Solar Energy Center PIP Plan implemented to date are summarized in the following sections. These elements outline Trelina Solar's approach to engaging with stakeholders from the start (pre-application phase) of the project.

Trelina Solar Energy Center Public Involvement Program Elements

In order to encourage public involvement in the project throughout the Article 10 process, information such as fact sheets, town board meeting and open house presentations, and educational materials were made available on the Trelina Solar Energy Center website (<http://www.trelina.solarenergycenter.com>). Information related to language access, identification of environmental justice areas, intervenor funding, a project toll-free telephone number (800-405-9723), and the use of document repositories for paper copies of major project documents are outlined in the PIP Plan.

The goals of the PIP Plan were to:

- Identify groups and individuals with a potential interest in the project, i.e., "stakeholders;"
- Implement activities to make stakeholders aware of the project;
- Facilitate stakeholders' access to information on the project and the Article 10 review process in a relatively convenient manner;
- Engage stakeholders to understand their interests related to the project and seek input as to how to best address their interests and concerns as the project moves forward; and,
- Gather specific information from stakeholders that can be used to design objective and useful studies for the project.

Trelina Solar completed consultations set forth in the PIP Plan and has held multiple stakeholder meetings. Throughout the process, Trelina Solar has encouraged community involvement through open dialog discussions and attendance at numerous meetings with various groups and individuals including adjacent landowners, Waterloo Town Board, the Seneca County Industrial Development Agency, the Town of Waterloo Supervisor, the Waterloo Central School District Superintendent, local interest groups, and others as detailed in Trelina Solar's PIP Meeting Log (also available on the DMM, last uploaded 08/10/2020).

The purpose of the PIP Meeting Log was to document outreach efforts with information such as date, location, attendees (or category thereof), a summary of topics discussed, and any follow-up steps. Trelina Solar Energy Center updated the log on a quarterly basis and posted it on the project website and filed it with the Siting Board Secretary. The PIP Meeting Log also detailed public and agency correspondence or outreach conducted through the project website and by phone. Documented correspondence with Trelina Solar, as well as relevant questions and concerns related to the project, were captured in the Meeting Log.

Public Notices

Notices of regulatory filings, such as the Article 10 Application submittal, were served in accordance with the Article 10 regulations and to a project mailing list consisting of the project stakeholders and their points of contact, including host and adjacent landowners, and additional addresses received through public outreach. Trelina Solar Energy Center publishes all required notices in local newspapers, The Seneca County Area Shopper and the Finger Lake Times Extra. The notices are not placed in the “legal notice” section of the newspapers, but rather a prominent location in the newspaper. Trelina Solar Energy Center notified the entire stakeholder list, as well as residents within two miles of the project individually by mailing an informational flyer announcing an open house and providing general project information to all unique addresses in the tax assessment rolls.

Open House Information

The PIP Plan had provided that two open house style public meetings would be held before Trelina Solar’s Article 10 Application was filed. Below is a summary of the two-session open house that Trelina Solar hosted on September 25, 2019:

- The open houses were conducted from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Serven Volunteer Fire Company in Waterloo
- Informational flyers were mailed to the entire stakeholder list as well as all landowners, businesses, and residences within the 2-miles of the project on September 11, 2019.
- Notification was published in The Seneca County Area Shopper, The Town Crier (no longer operational) and the Finger Lake Times Extra approximately two weeks prior to the open houses.

The PIP provided that two additional open house meetings (two meeting times within the same day) would be held after the filing of the Preliminary Scoping Statement during winter or spring 2020. Trelina had planned to host these events in May 2020, but this was prohibited by restrictions on public gatherings ordered by the Governor to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. Trelina discussed this matter with the NYSDPS and agreed to postpone holding these events until public health restrictions were lifted and exposure risks were sufficiently abated and submitted a supplement to the PIP on May 21, 2020, describing this situation.

Despite this circumstance, the Trelina prepared a Project fact sheet and Project Map to solicit public input prior to filing the Article 10 Application. These materials were delivered by United States (US) mail and/or email, depending on contact information availability and Stakeholders’ previously indicated preferences, during June 2020 to the Project Stakeholder List. The public was invited to submit comments within a 14-day period, via either the Project’s toll-free number or the Project’s email address. Responses to all public comments were provided and posted to NYSDPS’s DMM system and the Project website.

During the Open Houses and 14-day comment period, comments on time constraints in the Article 10 process, setback requirements, rural character, potential wildlife impacts, potential soil impacts,

potential visual impacts, decommissioning, restoration, and emergency response costs were received. The following actions summarize actions completed by Trelina Solar that addressed the comments:

- Increased setbacks from Project Components to property lines in specific locations;
- Designed a Landscape Screening Plan to address concerns about views from local roadways and residences;
- Conducted wildlife studies and minimized impacts to wetlands;
- Conducted a visual impact assessment; and
- Created a decommissioning plan detailing the decommissioning process.

Consultation with Affected Agencies and other Stakeholders

Each stakeholder consultation meeting was attended by the appropriate project representative and included an overview of the proposed project and the Article 10 review process. Additional topics covered during stakeholder consultations varied depending on the stakeholder's role and potential impact. Examples of topics included availability of funding for municipal and local parties, local laws, emergency response requirements, and potential environmental impacts. Stakeholder consultation meetings were documented and summarized in the PIP Plan Meeting Log. As appropriate, Trelina Solar conducted subsequent meetings to answer specific questions, and to discuss studies, mitigation, or other strategies that addressed stakeholder concerns. A key to these interactions, and a core of the PIP Plan, was receiving information from the stakeholders.

Document Repositories

While all information pertaining to the project was updated via the project website as appropriate, Trelina Solar Energy Center also maintained hard copies of the PIP Plan, the Preliminary Scoping Statement, the Article 10 Application, mailings, and announcements at the following locations for those stakeholders who may not have access to the website, or prefer to review hard copies:

- Town of Waterloo Town Hall, 66 Virginia Street, Waterloo, NY 13165
- Waterloo Library and Historical Society, 31 East Williams Street, Waterloo, NY 13165
- Geneva Public Library, 244 Main Street, Geneva, NY 14456

Planned Public Engagement Activities Through Construction and Commercial Operation

Trelina Solar will continue outreach activities with state, county, and town officials during construction. This outreach will include updates and discussions with the Town of Waterloo Supervisor to keep town officials and residents updated on the status of the project. Trelina Solar will also continue to meet with interested parties, if requested, and will continue to engage stakeholders, sponsor open communication with non-public entities, and continue meeting with community members during preparation for construction, construction itself, and operation.

At least 14 days prior to commencement of construction, Trelina Solar will provide notice to host and adjacent landowners within 2,500 feet of any parcels proposed for development and publish the notice in local newspapers (Finger Lakes Times, The Seneca County Area Shopper and the Finger Lakes Pennysaver in Seneca Falls). Notice will also be provided to the Town of Waterloo, Seneca County officials, and local emergency personnel. This notice will provide important construction-related information including, but not limited to, a map of the project, construction schedule, transportation routes, contact information for the project development manager and construction manager; a description of how to obtain additional information about the project; and contact information and procedure for registering a complaint.

Pre-construction activities will also include a pre-construction meeting with State agencies and the Town Supervisor and Highway Superintendent. The purpose of the meeting will be to inform the State and local officials of the pending construction activities and to establish open lines of communication.

In addition to the ongoing community engagement actions described above, Trelina Solar Energy Center has developed a Complaint Resolution Plan to facilitate outreach during construction and operation of the project. This plan outlines specific directions for members of the public to file any complaints and will establish a process for resolution of these complaints in a timely manner.

5) Applicability of the CLCPA goals regarding benefits to Disadvantaged Communities that would be realized with the development and construction of the Bid Facility

The Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (Climate Act) requires that 35-40% of the benefits from the State's investments must be directed to disadvantaged communities (DACs) and State agencies need to consider impacts on DACs in decision making. The New York State Climate Justice Working Group (CJWG) was charged with developing criteria to identify DACs. In March of 2023, the CJWG's final criteria defining DACs were adopted, resulting in 35% of New York State meeting the definition of DAC. In addition to identifying DACs, CJWG is responsible for ensuring that these communities directly benefit from the New York's investment in clean energy.

Trelina Energy Center is not located within a DAC identified by CJWG. Regardless, the project would result in significant positive economic impacts to the host community through the implementation of a low physical impact development in the form of solar energy generation. As discussed elsewhere in this proposal in greater detail, positive economic impacts in the form of PILOT and Host Community Benefit agreements and a multimillion-dollar construction payroll would provide substantial revenue to the local community and greater Seneca County area.

As stated earlier, solar energy generation has a low physical impact. Based on the weight of scientific evidence and the design measures to be incorporated into the proposed project design, the project will not have any adverse impact on public health or safety. Commercial-scale solar arrays provide the means to harness renewable solar energy for electricity production that is both clean and renewable. Through the development of solar energy technology, communities can maintain air quality with minimal, temporary emissions produced during construction activities,

typical of any commercial construction site. Solar energy technology allows for production of electricity without creating any gaseous, liquid, or solid waste byproducts during operation, and therefore eliminates the need to treat, collect, transport, and dispose of such waste in any significant amount. Indeed, to the extent solar energy is transmitted to the state electric grid, it is predicted to displace the generation of electricity from fossil fuel power plants, thereby reducing emission of air pollutants. This improvement in air quality benefits all the people in the affected airshed. Furthermore, development of solar energy production will help New York progress toward a more sustainable energy future. Solar energy is a dependable source in the energy market that will promote public health through improved air and water quality.

The project's operation and construction will not result in any significant and adverse disproportionate environmental impacts on affected communities. There will be no air emissions during operation of the facility; any vehicle/equipment emissions during construction and operation will not be significant and adverse and will not disproportionately affect any affected communities; and there will be no significant, adverse traffic, noise, or visual impacts caused by the project. To the contrary, there is the potential for reduced emissions of air pollutants from any fossil fueled power plants that currently affect the community. This will be documented as part of the future permit application.

6) Planned frequency of public events and the anticipated duration, in years, of the public engagement events component of community outreach, and strategies to ensure that public engagement events are widely attended by a representative cross section of host community residents.

Trelina Solar Energy Center plans to conduct public engagement throughout the life of the project, including during remaining permitting activities, construction and operation. Previously completed outreach activities were described previously. Below is a list of some of the planned public engagement events:

- Pre-Construction Phase (present through late-2024)
 - Coordination with governing agencies will occur throughout the pre-construction phase, including the Article 10 compliance filing review process and ultimately into construction and operation of the solar energy center
- Construction Phase (late-2024 through 2025)
 - Notifications on commencement of construction
 - Continuation of project website/email and phone number to contact project representatives
 - Public Complaint Resolution Plan during construction activities; the plan was submitted to the Public Service Commission for review and was approved as a compliance filing
 - Coordination with community members as requested to address any construction-related concerns
- Operation Phase (2025 through life of project)

- Notifications on commencement of operation
- Public Complaint Management Plan during operation activities throughout life of project

7) *Details of the direct benefits to the community the Proposer will advance, which may include a local ownership stake in the facility, reduced energy bills for those with homes or businesses in the Bid Facility's vicinity, and/or other direct benefits.*

Throughout outreach efforts, Trelina Solar Energy Center has provided details of the direct benefits to the community as a result of the project. These benefits include: the project's ability to provide millions in revenue to the county, town and school district to reduce the local tax burden or invest in infrastructure, additional services and resources for residents through a PILOT Agreement that was approved in October 2021; and the creation of numerous construction jobs; the generation of safe, clean renewable energy while reducing carbon dioxide emissions and using no water to generate electricity.

The project expects to participate in a Host Community Agreement (HCA) under the regulatory framework described in *Case 20-E-0249 - In the Matter of a Renewable Energy Facility Host Community Benefit Program*. Solar developers would be required to pay an annual fee of \$500/MW of nameplate capacity to the utility serving the affected municipalities. Utilities would then apply a bill credit to eligible customers' accounts.

8) *Details on past/planned engagement regarding payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) agreements or host community agreements (HCAs).*

Trelina Solar Energy Center has an approved Payment in Lieu of Tax Agreement (PILOT) with the Seneca County IDA. The project has an executed Host Community Agreement with the Town of Waterloo that provides benefits during the life of the project. Additionally, as noted above, the project anticipates entering a second HCA under the regulatory framework described in *Case 20-E-0249 - In the Matter of a Renewable Energy Facility Host Community Benefit Program* that would enable a bill credit to eligible customer accounts.

9) *Describe local interests and concerns, including identifying plans to thoughtfully build support for and respectfully responding to any opposition to the Bid Facility.*

Public outreach conducted to date has resulted in positive reactions welcoming the project and its potential for significant community benefits to the area. No major opposition of the project has been identified by Trelina Solar Energy Center. Community members have raised questions about the project's potential impact on viewshed and the potential for visual screening, setbacks from the roads or adjacent landowners, potential impacts on natural resources, decommissioning, restoration, and emergency response costs. In response, Trelina Solar Energy Center adjusted the project design to increase setbacks from property lines in certain locations, conducted in-depth studies and assessment of potential impacts of the project, minimized impacts to wetlands,

developed a visual screening plan (primarily landscape buffer described in #10 below), and conducted outreach describing the benefits of the project. Trelina Solar's Article 10 application included detailed studies including, but not limited to, a visual impact assessment, a proposed visual screening plan, a site restoration and decommission plan, and Trelina Solar's proposed setbacks.

At NextEra Energy Resources, we believe in building strong partnerships and supporting the communities we serve. At every stage of developing a renewable project, from permitting to construction to operations, we strive to: (i) establish a cooperative relationship with the community; (ii) listen to our neighbors and share information; and (iii) ensure that the project proposal fits the interests and priorities of the community.

10) Identify strategies the Proposer will use to mitigate concerns raised by the public regarding the Bid Facility, and if applicable, Energy Storage. This may include visibility and viewshed Impact mitigation efforts, accommodations to co-locate agricultural activities, or other issues of importance to the host communities.

The primary strategy used to mitigate concerns raised by the public was the siting of the array itself. This included the use of appropriate design considerations such as setbacks to roads and adjacent landowners, lot coverage that allows for sufficient generating capacity while also maintaining compatibility with the existing community character, and siting the facility in areas with less visibility to the public to the greatest extent practical. Trelina Solar Energy Center has incorporated a landscape buffer consisting primarily of native evergreen trees and shrubs to provide an effective visual buffer for adjacent residential receptors. Trelina Solar Energy Center strived to accommodate continued agricultural activities at the project area. As a layout of the area was developed, in connection with numerous other environmental and public input factors, Trelina Solar Energy Center worked with their landowners to provide access to other portions of the project area that are not being used for the solar facility so that these areas can continue to be utilized as they are under existing conditions.

Additionally, the project will address decommissioning concerns through compliance with the state's rigorous decommissioning requirements. As part of the project's permitting and approval process, in the early phases of its development, the project is required to fully fund decommissioning efforts through a bond, letter of credit, or other financial security. These funds are set aside to fully decommission the project and restore the land to its original condition. Furthermore, Trelina Solar Energy Center plans to abide by NYSAGM guidelines for solar installation requiring the land's potential to return to agricultural use after decommissioning.

11) Method for soliciting feedback and input from the public and affected agencies and the process for sharing feedback and responses publicly.

As described previously, Trelina Solar Energy Center has solicited feedback and input from the public and affected agencies through hosting a meeting with community members, meetings with affected agencies and other stakeholders as requested, at local town board meetings, and by

providing a project email and telephone number for the public to contact project representatives. Trelina Solar intends to continue public engagement throughout the life of the project.