

FLAT CREEK SOLAR PROJECT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – ISSUE #2



12. Is my view of the project taken into consideration in design?

Yes – we will be working to minimize the visibility of the project for all community members.

A visual impact assessment, including the identification of visually sensitive areas, has been performed to determine the extent and assess the significance of project visibility. The Towns of Root and Canajoharie have also been consulted to accurately determine sensitive visual areas and other areas of importance to the community.

Based on the visual impact assessment, and in accordance with §1100-2.9 of the Article VIII regulations, Cordelio will submit a Visual Impacts Minimization and Mitigation Plan as part of its application. It will contain visual minimization and mitigation measures, a lighting plan, and screen planting plans.

13. What impact will the project have on wildlife?

Cordelio has worked diligently to ensure the Flat Creek solar project will have minimal impacts to local wildlife. As part of the siting process, we are consulting with state and federal agencies and stakeholders, including the Office of Renewable Energy Siting, NYS Department of Public Service, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure that potential environmental impacts are fully considered in the project design. Studies to help assess potential impacts include seasonal avian studies, sensitive wildlife surveys, and wetland and habitat delineations. The information gathered from this comprehensive coordination and review is used to inform final siting and design as well as various resource management plans and environmental protection measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts to wildlife.

Exhibit 11 of the Article VIII application (Terrestrial Ecology) will include an analysis of the potential impacts to local wildlife, wildlife habitats, and wildlife migration corridors that may result from the construction and operation of the project. In addition, Exhibit 11 will identify and assess avoidance and minimization measures we are taking to reduce potential impacts on local wildlife and wildlife habitat.

The operation of the Flat Creek solar project will produce no pollution or emissions. Native vegetation can grow under the panels, which can provide pollinator habitat and food sources for local wildlife. Vegetation management concepts, such as integrated vegetation management, sheep grazing, and pollinator friendly practices, provide opportunities to promote beneficial plants species and enhance habitats on the site.

Fencing, a security measure put in place in accordance with industry best practices, will be limited to areas around panels and the substation. Collection easements between panel areas will not be fenced, which maintains corridors for larger wildlife movement through the project area.

14. What happens if the landscaping doesn't survive?

In accordance with the requirements of §1100-6.4 of the Article VIII regulations, Cordelio will work with a qualified landscape architect, arborist, or ecologist to inspect the screening plantings following the installation to identify plant material that did not survive, appears unhealthy, and/or otherwise needs replacement. Unsuccessful plantings will be removed and replaced upon discovery.

15. Will the Flat Creek solar project cause my property taxes to go up?

No – the project will not result in an increase in property taxes. The economic effects of the project are solely positive. The project will make annual payments to the towns of Root and Canajoharie, providing the towns with substantial resources to direct toward public safety, road upgrades, and other infrastructure improvements without needing to raise property taxes. In addition, the project will reduce utility bills for town residents by \$1.5 million per year for the first 10 years of operation.

16. Does the Flat Creek solar project have the right of eminent domain?

No, Flat Creek does not have the right of eminent domain and receipt of a permit through the Article VIII (formerly 94(c)) process does not grant any rights of eminent domain to private entities such as Flat Creek. Flat Creek has, and will, secure all land rights for the project through voluntary contractual agreements with landowners who are interested in participating in the project.

17. Will the Flat Creek solar project make noise?

Some local noise will occur during the construction phase of a solar project (trucks, pile-driving, etc.). Over the operating life of the project, there will be minor sound emissions during the day, mainly from power inverters (that change DC current to AC current) and the substation equipment. The project will be dormant and completely quiet at night.

As part of the Article VIII application process, Cordelio will submit a detailed study of the potential noise impacts associated with the construction and operation of the facility. The results of the study will assess expected noise levels and establish that the project will meet New York State standards, which have been determined to minimize potential adverse impacts associated with construction and operation of the Flat Creek solar project. The Article VIII regulations require that noise levels are at or below 45 dBA for non-participating residents, 55 dBA for participating residences, and 55 dBA at most property boundaries.

18. Are local communities receiving energy credits to reduce local customer electricity bills?

The Public Service Commission requires that owners of major renewable energy projects that execute renewable energy contracts with NYSERDA provide a host community benefit known as the “utility bill pay program.” Under this program, the project would pay \$1.5 million (\$500 per MW of project size) in utility bill credits for residents of the towns of Root and Canajoharie over the first 10 years of project operations. These credits would be used to offset utility bill amounts in the community.

19. Can solar panels be recycled?

Solar PV panels typically consist of glass, polymer, aluminum, copper, and semiconductor materials. Recycling technologies have emerged in the last several years that have enabled these materials to be recovered and recycled at the end of their useful life. PV solar panel recycling technologies have been shown to recover over 95% of semiconductor materials and over 90% of the glass in the panel. In other cases, solar PV components can be reused or refurbished to have a second life of generating electricity. The industry continues to work with recycling partners and to research and explore additional cost-effective recycling technologies.

20. Have archaeological studies been completed for the project?

Archaeological surveys are required in accordance with §1100-1.3(h) of the Article VIII regulations. The project has already submitted a Phase IA study and a Phase IB field study to the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for review. Project design and construction practices will take into consideration avoidance or mitigation for any archeological sites found within the project area. The results of all archaeological and cultural studies will be reviewed, and an effects determination will be included in the project’s Article VIII application, as required by §1100-2.10 of the Article VIII regulations.

21. How will the project affect hunting?

The Flat Creek solar project will not impact ongoing hunting activities on land that is not participating in the project, and there are no restrictions or setbacks that could impact hunting on non-participating properties. Hunting activities where active construction is occurring will be temporarily suspended, but only on participating landowner property. Cordelio will coordinate with participating landowners to ensure hunting activities are conducted in a safe manner while construction workers are on site.