NEWS RELEASE

Siting Board Approves 50-MW Solar Project Proposed for Henderson County

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Dec. 22, 2021) – The Kentucky State Board on Electric Generation and Transmission Siting (Siting Board) has approved, with modifications and conditions, an application from Henderson County Solar, LLC, to construct a 50-megawatt (MW) solar facility in Henderson County. The proposed solar facility is on an approximately 541-acre site located southwest of the city of Henderson, Kentucky.

Henderson County Solar is a subsidiary of Community Energy based in Radnor, PA. The proposed project will interconnect to an existing 69kV line owned and operated by Henderson Municipal Power & Light (HMP&L), and managed by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO). The power from the project will be sold to HMP&L under a 20-year power purchase agreement.

Henderson County Solar submitted its application, including the required Site Assessment Report, on June 25, 2021. The Siting Board conducted a site visit on Sept. 15, 2021, and a formal hearing on Oct. 25. There were no requests for intervention.

As authorized by statute, the Siting Board retained a consultant to review Henderson County Solar’s Site Assessment Report and proposed mitigation measures. The report, per statute, must contain a detailed site description of the proposed facility, as well as potential impacts to surrounding property, both during construction and operation post-construction. In addition to evaluation of the factors contained in the Site Assessment Report, KRS 278.710(1) directs the Siting Board to consider the following criteria in making a decision:

- Economic impact on the affected region and state;
- Existence of other generation facilities;
- Local planning and zoning requirements;
- Potential impact on the electricity transmission system;
- Compliance with statutory setback requirements; and
- History of environmental compliance

Henderson County Solar estimates approximately 150 full-time positions during the 6- to 9-month construction phase. Most of these jobs will be filled by craft workers and contractors. The operational phase is expected to support two to three full-time jobs. Based on the review of the evidence provided in the case, the Siting Board has determined the solar project will have a positive economic impact in the region.

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To minimize impacts both the construction and operational phases of the proposed solar facility, Henderson County Solar must comply with several mitigation measures and conditions. These include:

- Measures to minimize visual impacts, such as maintaining, as practicable, existing vegetation between the solar facility and nearby roadways and homes and planting and maintaining native evergreen species as a visual buffer.
- Measures to control noise, such as limiting construction activity and deliveries to the hours between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday; deploying noise suppression methods during construction as necessary; and following the Henderson County Solar Ordinance distance requirements on placement of solar panels, inverters, and substation equipment from surrounding properties.
- Measures to minimize impacts to roads, including developing a traffic management plan and complying with all state and local state and local road permit, truck weight, and other requirements.

In addition, Henderson County Solar must provide to the Siting Board a final site layout plan and a project-specific construction schedule. At least 30 days prior to construction Henderson County Solar must also provide notification to residents and businesses within 2,400 feet of the project boundary about the construction plan.

In Dec. 2019, Henderson County Fiscal Court adopted a Solar Energy System Ordinance establishing setback, visual screening, decommissioning, and other requirements for solar facilities. Relevant mitigation measures and conditions in today’s Order are consistent with Henderson County’s solar ordinance, but in some cases, the Siting Board has placed additional requirements, such as those regarding decommissioning. Henderson County Solar must file with the Siting Board a full decommissioning plan that commits Henderson County Solar to removing all solar facility components, above and below ground, and file a bond equal to the amount necessary to carry out the decommissioning plan, naming Henderson County as a beneficiary. The bond amount is to be reviewed every five years at Henderson County Solar’s expense to provide any updates to the cost of decommissioning.

The Siting Board found that Henderson County Solar met the requirements of KRS 278.710(1) so long as Henderson County Solar complies with the mitigation measures and conditions. Appendix A of today’s Order provides a complete list and additional details on the mitigation measures and conditions.

The Siting Board members consist of the three members of the Public Service Commission, the secretary of the Kentucky Energy and Environmental Cabinet or a designee, the secretary of the Kentucky Economic Development Cabinet or a designee, and for specific cases, the county judge or chair of local planning and zoning (if applicable), and a local member appointed by the governor. The local members are David Dixon, chairman of the Henderson City-County Planning Commission, and Herbert McKee. The chairman of the PSC serves as chairman of the Siting Board.

The Siting Board is headquartered at the PSC and PSC staff also serves as staff to the Siting Board. The Siting Board’s operations are funded through fees paid by applicants. The complete application, a description of the review process, public comments, and other case filings are available at https://psc.ky.gov/Case/ViewCaseFilings/2020-00391.