NEWS RELEASE

Siting Board Approves 200-MW Solar Project Proposed for Breckinridge and Meade counties

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 Green River Solar, LLC, to construct a 200-megawatt (MW) solar facility in Breckinridge and Meade counties. The proposed solar facility is on a 1,750-acre site, with approximately 1,100 acres in Breckinridge County and approximately 650 acres in Meade County.

Green River Solar, LLC, is an affiliate of NextEra Energy Resources, LLC. The project will interconnect to the existing 161kV Meade Substation owned by Big Rivers Electric Corporation (BREC). Power from the project is expected to be sold into the wholesale electricity market operated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator, Inc. (MISO).

Green River Solar submitted its application, including the required Site Assessment Report, on June 30, 2021. The Siting Board conducted a site visit on Sept. 2, 2021, and a formal hearing on Nov. 1. The Siting Board received one written public comment, and there were no requests for intervention.

As authorized by statute, the Siting Board retained a consultant to review Green River Solar’s Site Assessment Report and proposed mitigation measures. The Site Assessment 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

Green River Solar estimates approximately 300 full-time positions will be hired during the 12- to 18-month construction phase of the project. Most of these jobs will be filled by craft workers and contractors. The operational phase of the project is expected to support three 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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The Siting Board has authorized a deviation from the 2,000 feet statutory setback requirements, with specific setbacks stipulated in the Order. Any agreements by participating landowners to lesser setbacks must be filed with the Siting Board before project construction begins. Setbacks from any noise-emitting facilities during the operational phase of the project are also specified in the Order.

To minimize impacts both the construction and operational phases of the proposed solar facility, Green River 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.
- 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.
- Measures to protect karst features, including implementing a 50-foot setback from identified karst areas, and monitoring and reporting on any karst-related environmental or safety concerns throughout the construction and operational phases of the project.

As the Siting Board has required in all cases, Green River Solar must file a full decommissioning plan that commits the applicant to removing all solar facility components, above and below ground plan at the end of the project life. This plan must be completed at least one month before construction begins. Green River Solar must file a bond equal to the amount necessary to carry out the decommissioning plan, naming Breckinridge and Meade counties as beneficiaries. The bond amount shall be reviewed every five years at Green River Solar’s expense to provide any updates to the cost of decommissioning.

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

The Siting Board members consists 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 member for the Green River Solar case is Maurice Lucas. 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, mitigation measures and conditions, public comments, and other case filings are available at https://psc.ky.gov/Case/ViewCaseFilings/2020-00387.

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