



Eastern Cottontail Solar Project

Case #24-0495-EL-BGN

Project description

EDF Renewables proposes to develop, construct, and operate Eastern Cottontail Solar, a 220-megawatt (MW) solar facility in Walnut Township in Fairfield County. All documents filed in the case, including the application and the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB) staff report, are available online at www.OPSB.ohio.gov in case number 24-0495-EL-BGN.

The proposed Eastern Cottontail Solar facility would consist of large arrays of photovoltaic modules, commonly known as solar panels, ground-mounted on a tracking rack system. The project would occupy about 898 acres within a 1,550-acre project area. The project would include associated facilities such as transmission lines, access roads, underground and overhead electric collection lines, inverters and transformers, and a collection substation. Seven-foot-tall perimeter fencing would secure the facility with access through gated entrances. The solar modules would be set back a minimum of 300 feet from non-participating residences, 150 feet from the edge of pavement of roads, and 50 feet from non-participating property boundaries.

Staff report of investigation

The OPSB staff investigated the application and recommended the proposal to construct the Eastern Cottontail Solar facility be approved. The Board is not bound by the staff report; it could approve, deny, or approve the project with conditions. Should the Board choose to issue a certificate for the proposed facility, staff recommends in its report of investigation that the solar facility be subject to 64 conditions, including:

- Limit general construction activities from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. or until dusk.
- Install a perimeter fence type that is both wildlife permeable and aesthetically fitting for a rural location.
- Avoid or minimize damage to functioning field tile drainage systems and agricultural soils and promptly repair damaged field tile systems to at least original conditions or modern equivalent.
- Implement a complaint resolution process to address facility construction and operation complaints.
- Submit an updated decommissioning plan and total decommissioning cost estimate.
- Prevent the establishment and propagation of noxious weeds.
- Follow best practices for preserving agricultural land, including topsoil and grassed waterways.
- Avoid construction in the northern harrier habitat area during the nesting season.

Senate Bill 52

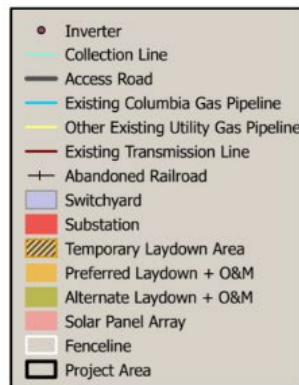
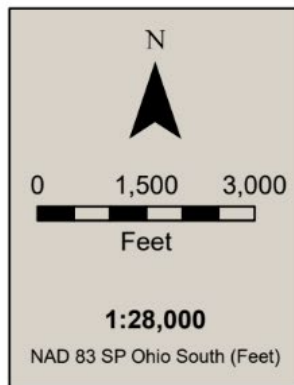
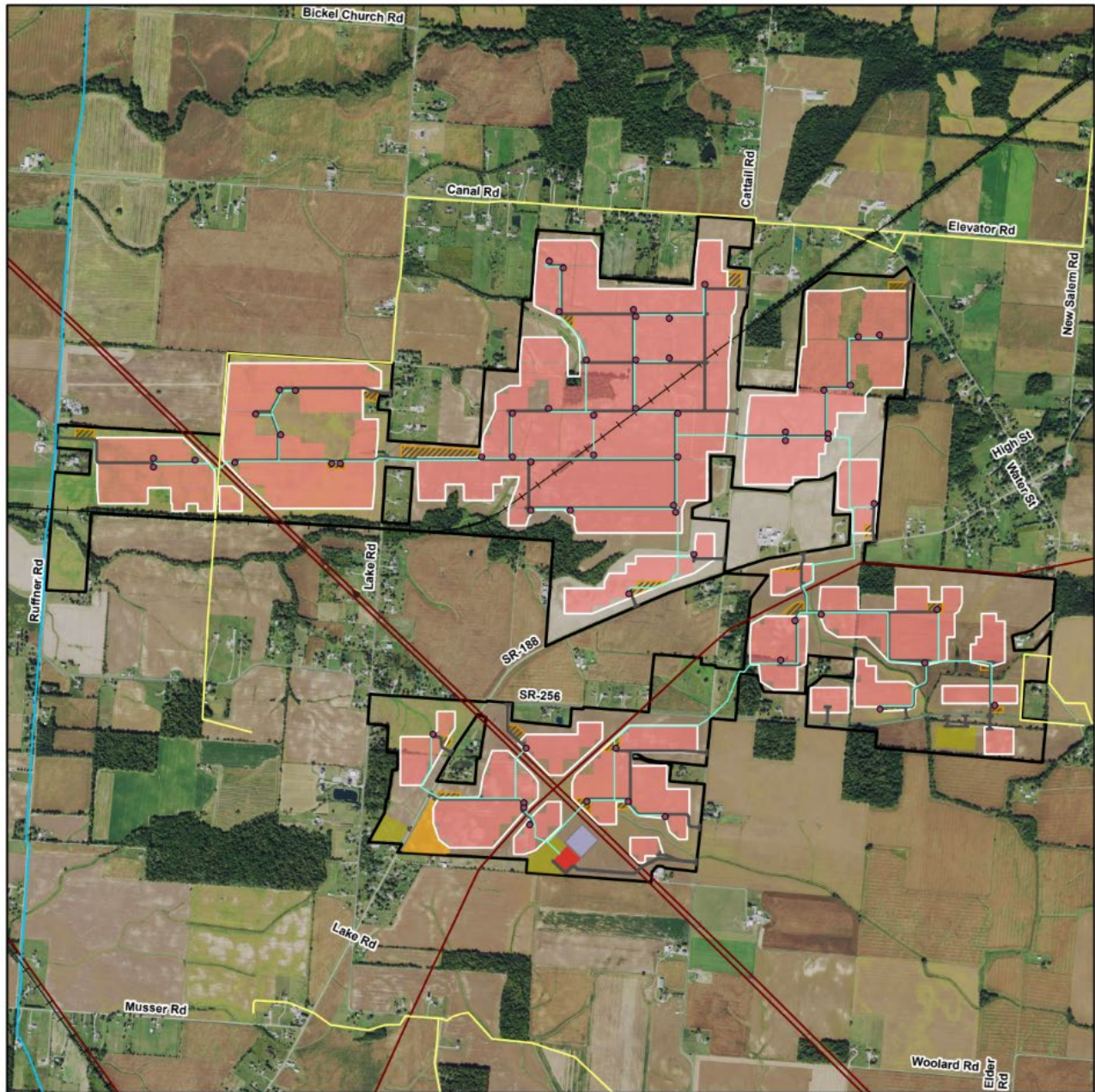
Senate Bill 52 (SB 52) provides opportunities for county commissioners and township trustees to participate in the siting of solar projects in their community. The Eastern Cottontail Solar facility is grandfathered under SB 52 except for the ad hoc board member provision. The Fairfield County Commissioners appointed Commissioner Steven A. Davis, and the Walnut Township Trustees selected Trustee Bill Yates as ad hoc board members for this project. Mr. Yates has since resigned the ad hoc position, and the township is in the process of selecting a new ad hoc member.

What's next?

An evidentiary hearing before an administrative law judge will begin on March 4, 2025, at 10 a.m., at the offices of the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, 180 E. Broad St., in Columbus. Once the evidentiary process is complete, the OPSB will schedule the project for a decision at a future monthly Board meeting.

Tonight's hearing

The public hearing allows you to provide sworn testimony to be added to the case record. You may also submit written comments by contacting the OPSB at 180 E. Broad St., Columbus, OH 43215, publiccomments@opsb.ohio.gov, or the online form at www.OPSB.ohio.gov. Please include case number 24-0495-EL-BGN in all correspondence.



Overview Map

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Eastern Cottontail Solar

Maps are presented solely for the purpose of providing a visual representation of the project in the staff report, and are not intended to modify the project as presented by the Applicant in its certified application and supplemental materials.