

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
UTILITIES COMMISSION
RALEIGH**

DOCKET NO. EMP-119, SUB 0
DOCKET NO. EMP-119, SUB 1

BEFORE THE NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION

DOCKET NO. EMP-119, SUB 0

In the Matter of)
Application of Macadamia Solar, LLC for)
a Certificate of Public Convenience and)
Necessity to Construct a Merchant Plant)
Solar Energy Facility in Washington)
County, North Carolina)

DOCKET NO. EMP-119, SUB 1

In the Matter of)
Application of Macadamia Solar, LLC for a)
Certificate of Environmental Compatibility)
and Public Convenience and Necessity to)
Construct Transmission Line in)
Washington County, North Carolina)

ORDER EXCUSING WITNESSES
FROM EXPERT WITNESS
HEARING

BY THE CHAIR: On August 30, 2021, Macadamia Solar, LLC (Macadamia or Applicant), filed an application pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 62-110.1 and Commission Rule R8-63 for a certificate of public convenience and necessity (CPCN) to construct a merchant plant solar photovoltaic facility with a capacity up to 484 MWAC in Washington County, North Carolina.

On September 13, 2021, the Applicant filed an application pursuant to N.C.G.S. §§ 62-101, 62-102, and 62-104 and Commission Rule R8-62 for a certificate of environmental compatibility and public convenience and necessity (CEPCN) to construct an approximately 6.53-mile 230kV transmission line to allow interconnection of the Applicant's proposed facility to the transmission grid.

On September 24, 2021, the Commission issued an Order Consolidating Dockets, Scheduling Hearings, Requiring Filing of Testimony, Establishing Procedural Guidelines, and Requiring Public Notice in the above-captioned dockets scheduling an expert witness hearing on January 25, 2022.

On January 4, 2022, the Applicant filed a Consent Motion to Continue Hearing. The Applicant requested a continuance of the expert witness hearing pending receipt of

additional interconnection studies and the issuance of a revised procedural order in the above-captioned dockets.

The Commission issued an Order Granting Consent Motion to Continue Hearing on January 5, 2022.

On June 1, 2022, the Applicant filed a Consent Motion for Procedural Schedule.

On June 14, 2022, the Commission issued an Order Scheduling Hearing and the Filing of Testimony (June 14 Order). The June 14 Order scheduled a hearing in the two above-captioned dockets for Tuesday, September 6, 2022, at 1:00 p.m. in Commission Hearing Room 2115, Dobbs Building, 430 North Salisbury Street, Raleigh, North Carolina for the purpose of receiving expert witness testimony regarding the Applicant's applications for a CPCN for a solar voltaic facility and for a CECPCN for a transmission line.

On August 18, 2022, Macadamia filed a Consent Motion to Excuse Witnesses Amanda Corll and Sami Abdulsalam. Macadamia, pursuant to Commission Rule R1-7, requests an order excusing Applicant witnesses Amanda Corll and Sami Abdulsalam from the expert witness hearing and accepting their prefiled testimony into the record.

Macadamia states that Witness Corll is Manager of GIS and Permitting for Geenex Solar, LLC, developer of the Macadamia Solar project. She provided prefiled testimony in support of Macadamia's CECPCN application on three occasions. Her testimony discussed issues pertaining to the siting of the proposed transmission line. Witness Corll has a conflict and cannot attend the September 6, 2022 expert witness hearing. However, Macadamia asserts that the issues discussed in her testimony are not in dispute, and the Public Staff supports the Commission's issuance of a CECPCN. The Public Staff consents to waive cross-examination of Witness Corll, stipulate her testimony and exhibits into the record, and excuse her from the hearing.

Regarding witness Abdulsalam, Macadamia states that he is the former Senior Consulting Manager for Siemens Industry, Inc., Siemens Power Technologies International (Siemens). He provided prefiled testimony on one occasion that responded to certain issues raised by Public Staff witness Lucas in his November 23, 2021 prefiled direct testimony. Witness Lucas's concerns pertained to Affected System Upgrades on the Duke Energy Progress (DEP) system that the parties understood (at the time of witness Abdulsalam's testimony) might be triggered or relied upon by Macadamia (the DEP Upgrade). Witness Abdulsalam testified generally about the benefits of Affected System Upgrades on DEP's system and about the particular benefits of the DEP Upgrade. This testimony was in response to concerns Public Staff Witness Lucas had raised that DEP ratepayers might pay approximately \$10 million for the DEP Upgrade while receiving few if any benefits.

The Applicant notes that since witness Abdulsalam provided his testimony, the Public Staff has recommended that the Commission grant both of Macadamia's applications. Further, DEP has indicated that the DEP Upgrade is required for reliability

purposes and that only the incremental costs of using a larger conductor for that upgrade (currently estimated at around \$150,000) are attributable to Macadamia. Macadamia is seeking an Affected System Operating Agreement (ASOA) with DEP under which it would forego any right to reimbursement for the cost of the DEP Upgrade. In Macadamia's view, because its project is unlikely to impose any costs on DEP ratepayers, the Commission no longer must address the question of whether construction of the DEP Upgrade benefits DEP ratepayers. Also, witness Abdulsalam no longer works at Siemens and is unavailable to testify on behalf of Macadamia. Although Siemens can provide another witness to sponsor witness Abdulsalam's testimony, Macadamia asserts that doing so is unnecessary given that the issues raised in the testimony are no longer necessary for resolution of the application. Macadamia submits that it would be more efficient to forego live testimony and excuse witness Abdulsalam (or his replacement) from testifying. The Public Staff consents to waive cross-examination of Witness Abdulsalam and excuse him from the hearing.

Considering the foregoing and the entire record in this proceeding, the Commission finds good cause to excuse witnesses Corll and Abdulsalam from appearance at the hearing and to accept their prefiled testimony and exhibits into the record.

IT IS, THEREFORE, SO ORDERED.

ISSUED BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION.

This the 24th day of August, 2022.

NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Erica N. Green". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Erica N. Green, Deputy Clerk