May 13 2015



# North Carolina Department of Administration

Pat McCrory, Governor

Bill Daughtridge, Jr., Secretary

May 13, 2015

Ms. Gail Mount North Carolina Department of Commerce Utilities Commission 4325 Mail Service Center Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-4325

# Re: SCH File # 15-E-4600-0562; Application of Pecan Solar, LLC for Certificate to construct a 74.9 MW Solar Photovoltaic Electric Generating Facility in Northampton Co. Docket #SP-5273 Sub 0.

Dear Ms. Mount:

The above referenced environmental impact information has been reviewed through the State Clearinghouse under the provisions of the North Carolina Environmental Policy Act.

Attached to this letter are comments made in the review of this document. Because of the nature of the comments, it has been determined that no further State Clearinghouse review action on your part is needed for compliance with the North Carolina Environmental Policy Act. The attached comments should be taken into consideration in project development.

Sincerely,

alBest

Crystal Best State Environmental Review Clearinghouse

Attachments

cc: Region L

Mailing Address: 1301 Mail Service Center Raleigh, NC 27699-1301 Telephone: (919)807-2425 Fax (919)733-9571 State Courier #51-01-00 e-mail state.clearinghouse@doa.nc.gov Location Address: 116 West Jones Street Raleigh, North Carolina

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Aay 13 2015



## North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Pat McCrory Governor Donald R. van der Vaart Secretary

MEMORANDUM

TO:	Crystal Best
	State Clearinghouse
FROM:	Lyn Hardíson X Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service
	Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service
	Permit Assistance & Project Review Coordinator

RE: 15-0562 Environmental Review –Application of Pecan Solar, LLC for Certificate to construct a 74.9 MW Solar Photovoltaic Electric Generating Facility Northampton County

Date: May 12, 2015

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has completed its review of the proposal for the referenced project. Based on the information provided, several of our agencies have identified permits that may be required. The agencies have offered some valuable guidance to be performed prior to application submittals and ground disturbance which will help reduce any impacts to the natural resources within the project area. The comments are attached for the applicant's review.

It is suggested to the applicant to contact NC Wildlife Resources Commission if the site attracts large numbers of migratory bird or observes fatalities or injured bird.

If the applicant has any questions pertaining to NCDENR permitting processes, please suggest to the applicant to contact David Lee, Permit Assistance Coordinator, in the Department's Raleigh Regional Office, (919)791-4200 for more permitting assistance. The proposed project is located within his geographic working territory.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond.

Attachment

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# $\odot$ North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission $\bigcirc$

Gordon Myers, Executive Director

#### MEMORANDUM

OLIA No. 15-0562

то:	Lyn Hardison, Environmental Assistance Coordinator NCDENR Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach (DEAO)				
FROM:	Maria T. Dunn, Northeast Coastal Region Coordinator Habitat Conservation Program				
DATE:	May 11, 2015				
SUBJECT:	Pecan Solar, 74.9 MW Solar Facility, SP-5273 Sub 0, Northampton County, North Carolina.				

Biologists with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) have reviewed the subject document and we are familiar with the habitat values of the area. Our comments are provided in accordance with provisions of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661-667e), and North Carolina General Statutes (G.S. 113-131 et seq.).

The applicant proposes to construct a 74.9 MW photovoltaic solar facility located east and west of Bethel Church Road approximately 0.6 to 2 miles north of the intersection of Bethel Church Road and Highway 186, 2 miles west of Seaboard, NC

The NCWRC has reviewed the available information and would like to state concern with the portion of the proposed project that lies within the wooded area. The proposed solar facility is very large and combined with other large facilities will have a cumulative impact to wildlife habitats. In general the NCWRC supports solar facilities located in open areas. However, the conversion of forests and wetlands to support solar development is causing increasing concern due to the loss of wildlife habitat, the fragmentation of wildlife habitat, and vegetative management needed post conversion for wetland and other forested areas.

We would also like to state concern regarding the location and size of this project in relation to foraging habitats for migratory waterfowl. Agricultural lands in eastern North Carolina often provide foraging opportunities for migratory waterfowl, especially in areas near natural waterbodies. The photovoltaic panels may reflect sunlight and resemble a water surface, potentially drawing waterfowl in to land. We request that if this facility is constructed, any fatalities or injured birds be reported. It should also be noted that as agricultural lands are transformed into solar facilities, winter foraging habitats for migratory waterfowl are lost. The cumulative loss of land may be of significant concern in time.

Mailing Address: Division of Inland Fisheries • 1721 Mail Service Center • Raleigh, NC 27699-1721 Telephone: (919) 707-0220 • Fax: (919) 707-0028 In addition to these concerns, the following statements should be observed:

- 1. Maintain or establish a minimum 100-foot undisturbed, native forested buffer along each side of perennial streams and 50-foot undisturbed, native forested buffer along each side of intermittent streams and wetlands. Forested riparian buffers provide habitat areas for aquatic and terrestrial wildlife species and travel corridors for terrestrial wildlife. In addition, forested riparian buffers protect water quality by stabilizing stream banks and filtering stormwater runoff.
- 2. Avoid or minimize impacts to wetlands during construction. In addition to providing wildlife habitat, wetland areas perform important functions of flood control and water quality protection. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permits and N.C. Division of Water Resources Section 401 Certifications are needed for any impacts to jurisdictional streams or wetlands. Temporarily disturbed wetland areas should be returned to original soils and contours, and reseeded with annual small grains appropriate for the season (e.g. oats, millet, rye, wheat, or rye grass) and should be allowed to revert to natural wetland vegetation.
- 3. If additional overhead transmission lines will be installed, then measures to minimize impacts to birds should be implemented. These can include increasing line visibility, insulating wires to cover exposed connections, and increasing the distance between wires so no contact with ground or other energized wire can be made. For more information see http://www.fws.gov/birds/documents/powerlines.pdf.
- 4. Consider establishing vegetative cover on the site that is beneficial to wildlife such as native warm season grasses. Although a site-specific plan is preferred, for general information on developing vegetative cover on disturbed soils, please see the attached *Seed Mixes for Revegetating Disturbed Sites*. Note: it is important to use all of the components of the Basic Mix. Also, we encourage adding one or more of the native species (found in the table at the end) to the Basic Mix to improve habitat for wildlife species.
- 5. Where feasible, consider establishing grassland habitats on the site. These are drought tolerant and require minimal mowing maintenance once established. Grasslands provide habitat for migratory and resident birds and small mammals particularly if mowing is done only in late winter/early spring after winter cover needs are reduced and before nesting occurs. For more information on grassland habitats and establishment, please contact Laura Fogo, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, at (910) 695-3323 or laura\_fogo@fws.gov.
- 6. If pesticides or chemicals will be used for site maintenance, then stormwater runoff from the site should be directed to bio-retention areas prior to discharge to streams or wetlands to provide additional protection for water quality and aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitats.
- 7. Sediment and erosion control measures should be installed prior to any land clearing or construction. These measures should be routinely inspected and properly maintained. Excessive silt and sediment loads can have numerous detrimental effects on aquatic resources including destruction of spawning habitat, suffocation of eggs, and clogging of gills of aquatic species.
- 8. Measures to mitigate secondary and cumulative impacts can be found in NCWRC's Guidance Memorandum to Address and Mitigate Secondary and Cumulative Impacts to Aquatic and Terrestrial Wildlife Resources and Water Quality (August 2002; <u>http://www.newildlife.org/Portals/0/Conserving/documents/2002\_GuidanceMemorandumforSecondaryandCumulativeImpacts.pdf</u>).

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project. If our agency can be of further assistance, please contact me at (252) 948-3916 or at maria.dunn@ncwildlife.org.

#### State of North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW - PROJECT COMMENTS

## Project Number <u>15-0562</u> Due Date: <u>5/6/2015</u> County <u>NORTHAMPTON</u>

After review of this project it has been determined that the ENR permit(s) and/or approvals indicated may need to be obtained in order for this project to comply with North Carolina Law. Questions regarding these permits should be addressed to the Regional Office indicated on the reverse of the form. All applications, information and guidelines relative to these plans and permits are available from the same Regional Office.

	PERMITS	SPECIAL APPLICATION PROCEDURES or REQUIREMENTS	Normal Process Time (statutory time limit)			
	Permit to construct & operate wastewater treatment facilities, sewer system extensions & sewer systems not discharging into state surface waters.	Application 90 days before begin construction or award of construction contracts. On-site inspection. Post-application technical conference usual.	30 days (90 days)			
	NPDES - permit to discharge into surface water and/or permit to operate and construct wastewater facilities discharging into state surface waters.	Application 180 days before begin activity. On-site inspection. Pre- application conference usual. Additionally, obtain permit to construct wastewater treatment facility-granted after NPDES. Reply time, 30 days after receipt of plans or issue of NPDES permit-whichever is later.	90-120 days (N/A)			
	Water Use Permit	Pre-application technical conference usually necessary	30 days (N/A)			
	Well Construction Permit	Complete application must be received and permit issued prior to the installation of a well.	7 days (15 days)			
	Dredge and Fill Permit	Application copy must be served on each adjacent riparian property owner. On-site inspection. Pre-application conference usual. Filling may require Easement to Fill from N.C. Department of Administration and Federal Dredge and Fill Permit.	55 days (90 days)			
	Permit to construct & operate Air Pollution Abatement facilities and/or Emission Sources as per 15 A NCAC (2Q.0100 thru 2Q.0300)	Application must be submitted and permit received prior to construction and operation of the source. If a permit is required in an area without local zoning, then there are additional requirements and timelines (2Q.0113).	90 days			
כ	Permit to construct & operate Transportation Facility as per 15A NCAC (2D.0800, 2Q.0601	Application must be submitted at least 90 days prior to construction or modification of the source.	90 days			
3	Any open burning associated with subject proposal must be in compliance with 15 A NCAC 2D 1900					
	Demolition or renovations of structures containing asbestos material must be in compliance with 15 A NCAC 20.1110 (a) (1) which requires notification and removal prior to demolition. Contact Asbestos Control Group 919-707-5950.	a) must be in compliance with 15 A NCAC 20.1110 which requires notification and removal prior to N/A				
כ	Complex Source Permit required under 15 A NCAC 2D.0800					
Ø	The Sedimentation Pollution Control Act of 1973 must be pro- control plan will be required if one or more acres to be disturb days before beginning activity. A fee of \$65 for the first acre fees.	20 days (30 days)				
	Sedimentation and erosion control must be addressed in accordance with NCDOT's approved program. Particular attention should be given (30 days) to design and installation of appropriate perimeter sediment trapping devices as well as stable stormwater conveyances and outlets.					
	Mining Permit	On-site inspection usual. Surety bond filed with ENR Bond amount varies with type mine and number of acres of affected land. Any arc mined greater than one acre must be permitted. The appropriate bond must be received before the permit can be issued.	30 days (60 days)			
	North Carolina Burning permit	On-site inspection by N.C. Division Forest Resources if permit exceeds 4 days	l day (N/A)			
	Special Ground Clearance Burning Permit - 22 counties in coastal N.C. with organic soils	On-site inspection by N.C. Division Forest Resources required "if more than five acres of ground clearing activities are involved. Inspections should be requested at least ten days before actual burn is planned."	i day (N/A)			
וב	Oil Refining Facilities	N/A	90-120 days (N/A)			
	Dam Safety Permit	If permit required, application 60 days before begin construction. Applicant must hire N.C. qualified engineer to: prepare plans, inspect construction, certify construction is according to ENR approved plans. May also require permit under mosquito control program. And a 404 permit from Corps of Engineers. An inspection of site is necessary to verify Hazard Classification. A minimum fee of \$200.00 must accompany the application. An additional processing fee based on a percentage or the total project cost will be required upon completion.	30 days (60 days)			

County NORTHAMPTON			Project Number: <u>15-0562</u> Due Date: <u>5/6/2015</u>	Normal Process Time (statutory time limit)				
PERMIT	`S		SPECIAL APPLICATION PROCEDURES or REQUIREMENTS	tournos, ame mun				
Permit to drill explo	atory oil or ga	s well	File surety bond of \$5,000 with ENR running to State of NC conditional that any well opened by drill operator shall, upon abandonment, be plugged according to ENR rules and regulations.	10 days N/A				
Geophysical Explora	tion Permit		Application filed with ENR at least 10 days prior to issue of permit. Application by letter. No standard application form.	10 days N/A				
State Lakes Construc	tion Permit		Application fee based on structure size is charged. Must include descriptions & drawings of structure & proof of ownership of riparian property.	15-20 days N/A				
401 Water Quality C	ertification		N/A	60 days (130 days)				
CAMA Permit for M	AJOR develo	pment	\$250.00 fee must accompany application	55 days (150 days)				
CAMA Permit for M	INOR develo	pment	\$50.00 fee must accompany application	22 days (25 days)				
Several geodetic mon N.C. Geodetic Surve			project area. If any monument needs to be moved or destroyed, please notify:					
Abandonment of any	wells, if requ	ired must be in acco	rdance with Title 15A. Subchapter 2C.0100.					
Notification of the pr	oper regional	office is requested i	f "orphan" underground storage tanks (USTS) are discovered during any excavation operation.					
Compliance with 154	A NCAC 2H 1	000 (Coastal Storm	water Rules) is required.	45 days (N/A)				
Catawba, Jordan Lak	e, Randalman	, Tar Pamlico or Nei	use Riparian Buffer Rules required.					
Resources/Public Wa specifications should	Plans and specifications for the construction, expansion, or alteration of a public water system must be approved by the Division of Water Resources/Public Water Supply Section prior to the award of a contract or the initiation of construction as per 15A NCAC 18C .0300 et. seq. Plans and specifications should be submitted to 1634 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1634. All public water supply systems must comply with state and federal drinking water monitoring requirements. For more information, contact the Public Water Supply Section, (919) 707-9100.							
	ater Supply Se	ction at 1634 Mail S	truction, plans for the water line relocation must be submitted to the Division of Water Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1634. For more information, contact the Public	30 days				
			ertain to cite comment authority)					
Division	Initials	No comment	Comments	Date Review				
DAQ	ddm			4/15/15				
(Aquifer & Surface) rb a			- A project that disturbs 1 acre or greater is required to secure an erosic and sedimentation control plan and must comply with construction stormwater permit conditions (NCG010000)	on 5/5/15 5/1/15				
			-The project is in the Chowan River Basin (unnamed tributary to Cypres Creek Class: C, NSW	5				
			The USGS Topographic map depicted crenulations that are within the project. (Note: the soil survey was not reviewed.)					
			If stream, wetland or riparian buffer impacts are proposed, this project need to comply with/secure a 404 permit from the USACE, obtain a 401 Water Quality Certification and a riparian buffer authorization as appropriate. [In addition to the solar panel production field area, acces roads and utilities impacts will need to be properly permitted.]					
			If wetland are impacted the will need to get a permit from USACE.					
			<ul> <li>I recommend a stream determination to ensure compliance with 401/404 expectations.</li> <li>Note: map provided with packet was so poor that a thorough desk top review was not possible.</li> </ul>					
DWR-PWS	N/A							

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DEMLR (LQ & SW)	JLH	Although mentioned in the report, S&E plan block is checked for additional	5/7/15
		detail.	
DWM - UST	MRP	Notify the UST Section - Raleigh Regional Office if petroleum-	5/5/15
		contaminated soil or groundwater is encountered.	

## **REGIONAL OFFICES**

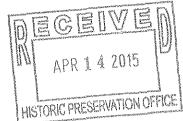
Questions regarding these permits should be addressed to the Regional Office marked below.

- Asheville Regional Office 2090 US Highway 70 Swannanoa, NC 28778 (828) 296-4500
- ☐ Fayetteville Regional Office 225 North Green Street, Suite 714 Fayetteville, NC 28301-5043
- ( 910) 433-3300

- Mooresville Regional Office 610 East Center Avenue, Suite 301 Mooresville, NC 28115 (704) 663-1699
- Raleigh Regional Office 3800 Barrett Drive, Suite 101 Raleigh, NC 27609 (919) 791-4200
- Washington Regional Office 943 Washington Square Mall Washington, NC 27889 (252) 946-6481
- Wilmington Regional Office 127 Cardinal Drive Extension Wilmington, NC 28405 (910) 796-7215
- Winston-Salem Regional Office 450 West Hanes Mill Road, Suite 300 Winston-Salem, NC 27105 (336) 771-9800

COUNTY: NORTHAMPTON

H11: ENERGY RELATED FACILITIES/ACTIVITIES



STATE NUMBER: 15-E-4600-0562 DATE RECEIVED: 04/10/2015 AGENCY RESPONSE: 05/06/2015 REVIEW CLOSED: 05/11/2015

lay 13 2015

CH 15- 0848

MS RENEE GLEDHILL-EARLEY CLEARINGHOUSE COORDINATOR DEPT OF CULTURAL RESOURCES STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE MSC 4617 - ARCHIVES BUILDING RALEIGH NC

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#### PROJECT INFORMATION

APPLICANT: N.C. Department of Commerce TYPE: State Environmental Policy Act Environmental Review

DESC: Application of Pecan Solar, LLC for Certificate to construct a 74.9 MW Solar Photovoltaic Electric Generating Facility in Northampton Co. Docket #SP-5273 Sub 0. - View document at http://starwl.ncuc.net/NCUC/portal/ncuc/page/Dockets/portal.aspx, Type SP-5273 Sub 0 in the Docket Number search line.

Located just east and west of Bethel Church Road approximately .06 to 2 miles north of the intersection of Bethel Church Road and Hwy 186 in an unincorporated area approximately 2 miles east of Seaboard, NC

The attached project has been submitted to the N. C. State Clearinghouse for intergovernmental review. Please review and submit your response by the above indicated date to 1301 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-1301.

If additional review time is needed, please contact this office at (919)807-2425.

AS A RESULT OF THIS REVIEW THE FOLLOWING IS SUBMITTED: 🔀 NO COMMENT COMMENTS ATTACHED Kense Gledhill-Earley 5.6-15 DATE: SIGNED BY:

# APR 1 5 2015

Due 4/22/15 A- Mer.

Due 5/12/15 5.00 ADV 515/15

COUNTY: NORTHAMPTON

H11: ENERGY RELATED FACILITIES/ACTIVITIES

STATE NUMBER:	15-E-4600-0562
DATE RECEIVED:	04/10/2015 📕
AGENCY RESPONSE:	05/06/2015 🥌
REVIEW CLOSED:	05/11/2015 🔮
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MS ELIZABETH HEATH CLEARINGHOUSE COORDINATOR DEPT OF AGRICULTURE 1001 MSC - AGRICULTURE BLDG RALEIGH NC

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SIGNED BY		Nu	1					DAI	ſE:	*pzpr	15



**Dr. Richard Reich** Assistant Commissioner North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Agricultural Services

April 22, 2015

Zeke Creech State Clearinghouse N.C. Department of Administration 1301 Mail Service Center Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1301



Joseph Hudyncia **Environmental Programs** 

OFFICIAL COP

State #: 15-E-4600-0562 RE: Photovoltaic Electric Generating Facility Bethel Church Rd., Seaboard, NC

Dear Mr. Creech:

The footprint of the proposed Photovoltaic Electric Generating Facility has the potential of irreversible damage and may increase the loss of state important farm and forest land thereby negatively impacting agricultural environmental balance in the immediate area. The NCDA&CS encourages due consideration be given to potential negative environmental and economic impacts on farm and forest land in the proposed area.

Agricultural production incomes from locally grown products have a considerable multiplier influence. It is estimated that for every 40 acres converted from agricultural production, one agribusiness job and its associated economic activity is lost indefinitely. Furthermore the costs of community services used by agribusiness are usually minimal and therefore are net contributors to county budgets. Both current and future cost for the conversion land from production agriculture is needed for an accurate evaluation.

Based on the secondary, cumulative, and direct impacts, this project has potential to adversely impact the agricultural environmental and economic resources in the proposed study area. The total negative impact on the environmental and agribusiness economy will be proportionately related to the total acres of farm and forest land taken out of production.

Respectfully,

Joseph Hudynčia **Environmental Programs Specialist** 

COUNTY: NORTHAMPTON

H11: ENERGY RELATED FACILITIES/ACTIVITIES

# STATE NUMBER: 15-E-4600-0562 DATE RECEIVED: 04/10/2015 AGENCY RESPONSE: 05/06/2015 REVIEW CLOSED: 05/11/2015

Carlos Moyg

MS CARRIE ATKINSON CLEARINGHOUSE COORDINATOR DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION STATEWIDE PLANNING - MSC #1554 RALEIGH NC

REVIEW DISTRIBUTION

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AS A RESULT OF	F THIS REVIEW THE FOLLOWING IS SUBMIT	TED: 🔭 NO COMMENT 🗌 COMMENTS ATTACHED
SIGNED BY:	<u> </u>	DATE: April 15, 2015
		EES 05 81 9173
		(P3 2015 2)

COUNTY: NORTHAMPTON

H11: ENERGY RELATED FACILITIES/ACTIVITIES STATE NUMBER: 15-E-4600-0562 DATE RECEIVED: 04/10/2015 AGENCY RESPONSE: 05/06/2015 REVIEW CLOSED: 05/11/2015

MS CAROLYN PENNY CLEARINGHOUSE COORDINATOR CC&PS - DIV OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT PROGRAM MSC # 4719 RALEIGH NC

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APR 1 4 2015

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Dawdfelorg MA wSFHA.

If additional review time is needed, please contact this office at (919)807-2425.

AS A RESULT OF THIS REVIEW THE FOLLOWING IS SUBMITTED: 10 NO COMMENT | COMMENTS ATTACHED

SIGNED BY:

DATE: 4/20/15