

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION**

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

Location

Dutchess County Airport (POU)
Poughkeepsie, New York

Introduction

This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) sets out the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) consideration of environmental and other factors for Airport Layout Plan (ALP) approval for the proposed lease of airport property for the installation and operation of a solar array at Dutchess County Airport (POU). The FAA arrived at the determinations and approvals presented in this FONSI by considering public comments and reviewing the environmental analysis in the *SolarCity Dutchess County Airport* Final Short Environmental Assessment Form (Final EA), dated July 2016. The FAA must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) before being able to take the federal actions necessary to allow the Proposed Action described in the Final EA to take place at POU. The EA was prepared in accordance with the requirements of NEPA as discussed in FAA Orders 5050.4, *Airport Environmental Handbook*, 1050.1, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*, and the *Desk Reference for Airport Actions*.

Background

Dutchess County selected SolarCity for design, development, construction, operation and maintenance of a PV Solar Array located on Dutchess County property. SolarCity was named NYSAC's (New York State Association of Counties) preferred vendor in 2103. As a NYSAC member, Dutchess County selected SolarCity for the project located at Dutchess County Airport, which is owned by Dutchess County. SolarCity submitted a bid for incentive for this project in October of 2013.

Proposed Action Description

The proposed action involves the installation of up to 2,533.32 kW of new ground mounted solar PV panels, including foundations, set at tilt angles and proper azimuths to receive solar energy on approximately 10 acres of airport property. The project also includes trenching for electrical conduits, the installation of DC/AC converters in metal cabinets, and the installation of concrete slabs (approximately 10'x15') for each inverter. The site will be enclosed with a chain link fence as the proposed project site is located outside of the airport security fence and on airport property. The gravel access road is proposed from the array to an existing entrance on the northeast side of New York State Route 376. The array field will be interconnected to and provide energy into Central Hudson's local distribution grid.

There will be no revenue generated by either Dutchess County Airport or the County of Dutchess from construction or operation of the proposed solar array. Revenue generated by the Dutchess County Airport will not be used to pay for the construction or maintenance of the solar array. The lease payments from the project will go directly to the airport's improvement/management fund.

SolarCity will retain ownership of the solar array panels and all associated electrical equipment and will provide equipment maintenance, based on the terms of the lease agreement. Dutchess County will retain ownership of and maintain the land upon which the array is situated.

Purpose and Need

The purpose and need of the proposed action is to provide Dutchess County with a reduced cost of energy from a sustainable form of green technology. Use of solar PV arrays would decrease the demand for, and reliance on, electricity generated by fossil-fuel power plants while contributing to Airport sustainability.

Alternatives

In addition to the no action alternative, alternatives were considered that involve the installation of ground mounted solar PV arrays at other sites and with different configurations. However, these alternate sites were located near an abandoned landfill, required extensive tree removal, and/or required extensive land disturbance.

Environmental Consequences

The attached Environmental Assessment (EA) addresses the effects of the proposed action on the quality of the human and natural environment, and is made a part of this Finding. The following impact analysis highlights the more thorough analysis presented in the document.

Air Quality

Because the Airport is located in a moderate non-attainment area for ozone and is part of the ozone transport region, the project is required to meet General Conformity requirements under the Clean Air Act, including a determination of whether the proposed action would result in emissions that exceed *de minimis* thresholds outlined in 40 CFR 93 Section 153. Additionally, under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), an air quality analysis is generally required to determine whether the proposed action would violate the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The only expected increase in emissions would result from construction activities related to installing the solar PV panels, which would be temporary, and would remain well below the *de minimis* thresholds for each criteria pollutant. Accordingly, the proposed action is not anticipated to result in adverse impacts to air quality.

Construction Impacts

Limited short-term effects resulting from construction may occur. Specific effects could include noise from construction equipment on the site, fugitive dust, soil erosion, and sedimentation. These impacts will be limited by requiring the contractor to comply with all contract provisions for environmental protection. These short-term construction impacts will not persist beyond the construction period, and no significant long-term construction impacts are expected as a result of this project.

Other Impact Categories

The impacts of the proposed Federal action on air quality, noise, land use compatibility, social, induced socioeconomic impacts, water quality, DOT Section 4(f), biotic communities, endangered species, coastal zones, floodplains, coastal barriers, prime and unique farmland, energy supply and natural resources, light emissions, solid waste impacts, construction impacts, environmental justice, and cumulative impacts were evaluated in the Final EA. It is the FAA's finding that the Proposed Action will not have any significant effect on any of the above noted categories.

Conditions of Approval/Mitigation Measures

FAA has adopted all practicable means to avoid or minimize the adverse environmental impacts of the Proposed Action. FAA is conditioning approval of the Proposed Action upon the implementation of these measures by Dutchess County through the airport layout plan. FAA may also take appropriate steps through contract plans, specifications, grant assurances, and special grant conditions to ensure these measures are undertaken. FAA will further monitor the implementation of these mitigation measures as necessary to assure they are carried out as Proposed Action commitments, as required by the Council on Environmental Quality.

1. Construction contract provisions shall contain the provisions of AC 150/5370-10A, "Standards for specifying construction of Airports" item P-156, temporary air, water pollution, soil erosion and siltation control and AC 150/5320-5B, "Airport Drainage."
2. All necessary permits for construction of the proposed action and associated mitigation shall be obtained prior to construction.

Public Involvement

A Notice of Public Availability was published in *The Poughkeepsie Journal*. The EA was available to any person who requested to review a copy from May 19, 2016 to June 18, 2016.

The document was also available online at

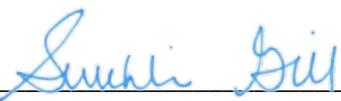
<http://www.co.dutchess.ny.us/CountyGov/Departments/Airport/ARIndex.htm>.

No public comments were received.

CONCLUSION AND APPROVAL:

After careful and thorough consideration of the facts contained herein, the undersigned finds the federal action is consistent with existing national environmental policies and objectives as set forth in Section 101 (a) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and it will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment or otherwise include any condition requiring consultation pursuant to Section 102(2)(c) of NEPA.

Recommended:  October 13, 2016
 Environmental Specialist
 New York Airports District Office
 Date

Approved:  October 19, 2016
 Manager
 New York Airports District Office
 Date

Disapproved: _____
 Manager
 New York Airports District Office
 Date