

**From:** Melinda Scott <[mscott@willistonvt.org](mailto:mscott@willistonvt.org)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, April 23, 2025 3:24 PM

**To:** PUC - Clerk <[PUC.Clerk@vermont.gov](mailto:PUC.Clerk@vermont.gov)>

**Subject:** Town of Williston comment letters for Williston G and Williston H solar projects

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To the Public Utility Commission Clerk,

The Town of Williston would like to submit the attached comment letters for Williston H Solar - 25-0211-AN and

Williston G Katie Lane Solar - 25-0209-AN. If you could reply to let us know that you received the attached letters, I would appreciate it.

Best,

Melinda

Melinda Scott

Senior Planner

Town of Williston

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Town Clerk/Treasurer  
878-5121  
•  
Planning/Zoning  
878-6704  
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Lister/ Assessor  
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878-2762

April 15, 2025

Holly R. Anderson  
Clerk of the Public Utility Commission  
112 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05620-2701

Re: Williston H Chip Alley Solar, LLC (GlobalFoundries) Petition for 2.75 MW Solar Array off Chip Alley, Williston (case #25-0211-AN)

Dear Ms. Anderson,

The Town of Williston has received the 45-day notice of the above-named application submitted by Encore Renewable Energy to develop a 2.75 MW solar array to be located off Chip Alley in Williston on a parcel owned by GlobalFoundries, Inc.

The Town has reviewed this project's conformance with the 2016 Comprehensive Plan ("the Plan") and Enhanced Energy Plan ("the Energy Plan"), which received an affirmative determination of energy compliance under 24 VSA § 4352 from the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission.

The Town strongly supports the proposed project as it furthers the Williston Energy Plan's goal to double the amount of renewable energy generation sited in Williston. To this end, the Energy Plan states that the town will "seek opportunities to encourage Utility-Scale Renewable Energy Projects" such as the proposed project.

The Town's Energy Plan has siting policies to use when deciding whether projects meet the orderly development criterion (Policy 6.7). The State of Vermont defines known and possible constraints which are protected during the PUC review process. The Town has also identified additional local constraints that are discussed in the siting policies as follows.

### **Siting Policies**

#### Policy 2. Scenic Viewsheds (possible constraint)

*Large scale solar facilities and wind turbines should be located to preserve the scenic quality of the viewsheds identified in Chapter 13 of the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission and Selectboard will review viewshed relevance to a proposed renewable energy generation project on a case-by-case basis. Measures to preserve the scenic quality include, but are not limited to, selecting and siting equipment which keeps the project from being the dominant feature of a viewshed. The project should be positioned in such a way so that it blends into the site. This can be achieved by following state setback requirements and using the natural topography to break the mass of the project.*

The project area is not located in a mapped scenic viewshed on Map 24b of the 2016 Williston Town Plan. Policy 2 does not apply.

#### Policy 3. Habitat (possible constraint)

*Development, including energy generation, distribution, storage, transmission facilities and fencing, should be carefully located and designed to avoid habitat fragmentation and impacts that would demonstrably reduce the ecological function on a parcel in conservation areas/wildlife travel corridors/wildlife core habitat.*

The project area is within a Significant Wildlife Habitat Area (SWHA) due to its designation as Core Habitat on Map 18 of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan. The town is requesting that a Habitat Disturbance Assessment (HDA) or similar be prepared by a qualified wildlife biologist and submitted by the applicant as part of the application for the Certificate of Public Good. The town



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has specific concerns about the potential impact of the perimeter fence on wildlife travel and requests the applicant to address those concerns.

#### Policy 4. Watershed Protection Buffers (known constraint)

*Watershed protection buffers shall remain undeveloped with the exception of consolidating existing utility infrastructure (See Table 1 in the 2016-2024 Comprehensive Plan for specific buffer distances).*

The project area is bounded by an unnamed stream, Class 2 wetland and the Winooski River. The town requests that a 50ft buffer be maintained between all disturbed areas and the unnamed stream and wetland, and that a 150ft buffer be maintained between all disturbed areas and the Winooski River.

Policy 5. Location – The project location meets the intent of the town’s siting policy to “*Locate energy generation proximate to existing distribution and transmission infrastructure with adequate capacity and near areas with high electric load.*”

The project narrative states that the project will provide locally generated renewable energy to GlobalFoundries. As its own electric utility, the Project will contribute to GlobalFoundries’ achievement of the requirements under the Vermont Renewable Energy Standards by creating new, locally generated renewable energy. The Global Foundries grid is independent of and not connected to GMP’s grid and thus will not impact the capacity of existing distribution and transmission infrastructure of electricity supplied to the town.

#### Policy 6. Wind Energy System Location

Not applicable

#### Policy 7. Historic Districts

Not applicable.

#### Policy 8. Utility Lines

*Locate utility lines serving new developments underground and site transmission lines, substations, and similar support facilities within existing utility corridors and placed underground except where the presence of bedrock or other environmental constraints makes underground installation prohibitively expensive. Careful siting and screening will be required for above ground utility lines. Impacts to constraints identified in the constraints section should be minimized according to applicable policies in this section and in the comprehensive plan.*

The town recommends that the utility lines be placed underground where reasonably feasible and located so as to minimize impacts to any identified constraints.

#### Policy 9. Energy Storage

*Renewable energy generation projects that can accommodate energy storage are strongly encouraged.*

The town would be interested in learning whether and how the proposed project plans to incorporate energy storage.

This review is based on the information currently available. The town will review and comment on materials submitted as the Section 248 review process continues.

Sincerely,

Shayla Livingston, Chair and Hana Kessler, Vice Chair  
Williston Planning Commission