

**STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

Case No.

Petition of Williston G Katie Lane Solar, LLC
for a certificate of public good, pursuant to 30
V.S.A. § 248, for a 2.9 MW ground-mounted
solar array of Mountain View Road, in
Williston, Vermont

**PREFILED TESTIMONY AND DECLARATION OF
JEREMY B. OWENS
ON BEHALF OF
WILLISTON G KATIE LANE SOLAR, LLC**
This document and supporting exhibits have been filed ePUC

Mr. Owens' testimony addresses the proposed Williston G Katie Lane Solar Project's compliance with aesthetics and scenic beauty (30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(5)) and orderly development of the region, (30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(1)), including municipal screening requirements, as presented in the report entitled "Aesthetic & Orderly Development Analysis Report" prepared by T.J. Boyle Associates, LLC.

1 **Introduction**

2 Q1. Please state your name, current employer, business address, and position.

3 A1. My name is Jeremy B. Owens. I am a licensed landscape architect with T.J. Boyle
4 Associates, Landscape Architects and Planning Consultants, with a business address of
5 301 College Street, Burlington, Vermont.

6 Q2. What is your occupation?

7 A2. I am a Vermont licensed Landscape Architect. A copy of my resume is attached as Exhibit
8 WGKL-JO-1.

10 Q3. Have you previously testified at the Vermont Public Utility Commission?

11 A3. Yes. I have testified before the Commission on several Projects, including, among others:
12 Case No. 24-1024-PET on behalf of Williston E Chip Alley Solar, LLC, Case No. 23-1050-
13 PET on behalf of I Love Cows Solar, Case No. 23-2420-PET on behalf of Hunt Road Solar,
14 Case No. 23-1994-PET on behalf of Lowery Road Solar, Case No. 22-4376-PET on behalf
15 of Midway Ave Solar, Case No. 22-3941-PET on behalf of Steinberg Road Solar, Case
16 No. 22-2073-PET on behalf of Bullfrog Hollow Solar, Case No. 21-1254-PET on behalf
17 of Springfield BESS, Case No. 21-1042-PET on behalf of Georgia Bess, and Case No. 17-
18 3539-PET on behalf of Saint Albans Solar. I have also provided testimony or exhibits
19 before numerous local Vermont development review boards and planning commissions,
20 Act 250 district commissions, the Vermont Environmental Court, and the New Hampshire
21 Site Evaluation Committee. A selection of previous projects on which I have worked are
22 included in Exhibit WGKL-JO-1.

1
2 Q4. What is the purpose of your testimony?

3 A4. My testimony addresses aesthetics (30 V.S.A § 248(b)(5); 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(8)),
4 compliance with Public Utility Commission Rule 5.800, and orderly development of the
5 region (30 V.S.A § 248(b)(1)), including municipal screening requirements. My testimony
6 presents the report entitled, Williston G Katie Lane Solar – Aesthetic & Orderly
7 Development Analysis Report (“Report”) for Williston G Katie Lane Solar, LLC’s
8 (“Williston G Katie Lane Solar” or “WGKL”) proposed installation and operation of a
9 2.375 MW (AC) ground-mounted solar electric generation facility located off of Mountain
10 View Road (“Site”) in the Town of Williston, Vermont (“the Project”), which was prepared
11 under my direction. The Report describes the visual analysis undertaken by T.J. Boyle
12 Associates that assesses visual change due to the Project and determines whether these
13 changes create adverse or unduly adverse impacts to the visual character of the areas and
14 viewsheds through which they pass. The Report provides a detailed Project description and
15 is included with this filing as Exhibit WGKL-JO-2. Included as appendices are:

16 Appendix A: Project Maps

17 Appendix B: Photographic Inventory

18 Appendix C: Project Cross-Sections

19 Appendix D: Regional & Town Plan Excerpts

20 I also prepared a memo regarding above-ground historic structures in the vicinity of the
21 Project, which is sponsored by Jake Clark and included as Exhibit WGKL-JC-5.

22 **SECTION 248 CRITERIA**

Orderly Development of the Region

(30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(1))

Q5. Will the Project unduly interfere with the orderly development of the region with due consideration given to the recommendations of the municipal and regional planning commissions, the recommendations of the municipal legislative bodies, and the land conservation measures contained in the plan of any affected municipality and with substantial deference given to the land conservation measures and specific policies contained in the duly adopted regional plan?

A5. No, the Project will not unduly interfere with orderly development of the region. As described in the Aesthetics & Orderly Development Analysis Report, which is attached here as Exhibit WGKL-JO-2, the Project site is not under conservation easements or restrictions and the Project will not violate conservation measures in the municipal or regional plans as there are no such measures applicable to the Project site. Furthermore, the Project supports regional and municipal goals for the development of well sited renewable energy projects. The prefiled testimony of Jake Clark addresses the Project's due consideration to the recommendations of the municipal and regional planning commissions.

Q6. Has any portion of the 2018 ECOS Plan Regional Plan ("Regional Plan") received an affirmative determination of energy compliance under 24 V.S.A. § 4352?

A6. Yes, as set forth in Exhibit WGKL-JO-2, page 21. The Regional Energy Plan, included as Supplement 6 with the Regional Plan, received an affirmative determination of energy compliance under 24 V.S.A. § 4352 from the Department of Public Service.

1
2 Q7. Are there any land conservation measures or specific policies in the approved portion of
3 the Regional Energy Plan or Williston 2025-2033 Comprehensive Plan (“Town Plan”) to
4 which the Project must give substantial deference?

5 A7. No. Section 248(b)(1)(C), states that the “Commission shall give substantial deference to
6 the land conservation measures and specific polices contained in a duly adopted regional
7 and municipal plan that has received an affirmative determination of energy compliance...”
8 This section explains that “substantial deference” means that a “land conservation measure
9 or specific policy shall be applied in accordance with its terms . . .”
10

11 With respect to the Regional Plan and approved energy portion of the Regional Plan
12 (Supplement 6), Exhibit WGKL-JO-2 addresses the terms contained therein, and applies
13 those provisions to the Project (Exhibit WGKL-JO-2, pages 21-24). I conclude based on
14 this analysis, that the Project complies with the Regional Plan and Regional Energy Plan
15 because there are no clearly applicable land conservation measures or specific policies
16 contained in these Plans that prevent development the Project Site. The Project does,
17 however, support the Region’s energy goals to have renewable energy sources meet 90%
18 of the state’s total energy needs by 2050.
19

20 With respect to the Town Plan and Williston Energy Plan dated August 19, 2025 (“Town
21 Energy Plan”), Exhibit WGKL-JO-2 addresses the terms contained therein, and applies
22 those provisions to the Project (Exhibit WGKL-JO-2, pages 24-30). Based on my analysis

1 and the analysis performed by Adam Crary (see prefiled testimony of Adam Crary), I
2 conclude that the Project complies with the Town Plan and Town Energy Plan because
3 there are no clearly applicable land conservation measures or specific policies contained in
4 these Plans that apply to the Project site. No land conservation measures specific to the
5 Project site were found in these documents or at the Project site that would be unduly
6 affected by the Project. The Project does, however, support the Town's goal to double the
7 amount of renewable energy generation sited in Williston from 2015 levels.

8
9 Q8. Has the Town of Williston adopted applicable screening requirements under Title 24 as
10 permitted under 30 V.S.A. § 248(b)?

11 A8. No, the Town of Williston does not have specific landscape screening requirements for
12 solar installations.

13
14 **Aesthetics and Scenic Beauty**
15 (30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(5))

16 Q9. Please describe the work you have performed with respect to the Project.

17 A9. I performed a visual analysis to evaluate potential aesthetic impacts due to the proposed
18 solar electric generation facility. The work is described in the Report that my firm prepared,
19 which is attached here as Exhibit WGKL-JO-2. I also assessed the Project's potential
20 impact on nearby above ground historic structures and discuss my findings and conclusions
21 in Exhibit WGKL-JC-5 sponsored by witness Jake Clark.

22

1 Q10. Please summarize your assessment of the Project's aesthetic (visual) impacts.

2 A10. The assessment involved analysis of geographic information system data and viewsheds,
3 field investigation, review of topographic mapping, detailed design plans, and aerial
4 photography. Our assessment concluded that the proposed Project would have an adverse
5 effect on the scenic or natural beauty or aesthetics of the area from the adjacent portion of
6 Mountain View Road. However, the adverse effect would be limited to the area of this
7 road that is closest to the Project, and visibility from more distant locations would be
8 screened by intervening buildings, landform or existing vegetation.

9
10 A review of the Project under the second part of the Quechee Test found that the Project's
11 aesthetic impact would not be unduly adverse. Based on the review of regional and town
12 plans, the Project would not violate any clear written community standard intended to
13 preserve the aesthetics or scenic or natural beauty of the area. The Petitioner has
14 incorporated generally available mitigating steps, including setting the Project back 112'
15 from Mountain View Road, locating overhead electric lines approximately 642' from
16 Mountain View Road, retaining or managing vegetation heights around the array where
17 feasible, and locating the Project in an area where solar generation structures have been
18 visible for the last 10 years, . The Project would not offend the sensibilities of the average
19 person for several reasons: the limited visibility of the proposed array from a short portion
20 of Mountain View Road where solar array structures are already visible in the landscape;
21 the Project will not intrude into any existing scenic views; similarities between the
22 proposed materials compared with existing materials currently visible in the landscape; and

1 the retention of existing vegetation around the Project where feasible, including areas
2 where vegetation will be managed to maximum heights of 15' and 25'.
3

4 Q11. Will the Project have an undue adverse effect on aesthetics or the scenic or natural beauty?

5 A11. No, it will not. For the reasons set forth above, the Project's aesthetic impact will not
6 unduly impact the scenic beauty of the surrounding area.
7

8 Q12. Based on your review of available data and aesthetic impacts, will the Project have an
9 adverse effect on nearby properties of historical significance?

10 A12. No. While my review indicates that there is a nearby buildings of potential historical
11 significance, my analysis contained in Exhibit WGKL-JC-5 indicates that existing solar
12 facilities adjacent to the Project are currently visible from this property, and the Project
13 includes vegetation management measures that will soften and screen views of the
14 proposed Project from this property.
15

16 Q13. Does this conclude your testimony at this time?

17 A13. Yes, it does.
18
19

EXHIBITS

Exhibit WGKL-JO-1

Resume

Exhibit WGKL-JO-2

Aesthetic Analysis and Orderly Development Report

WITNESS DECLARATION

I, Jeremy B. Owens, being over 18 years of age, and competent to testify on these matters declare that on behalf of Petitioner, I prepared my prefiled testimony and exhibits in the above captioned matter and I have the necessary expertise to testify to the same information. I declare that the testimony and exhibits that I have sponsored are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief and were prepared by me or under my direct supervision. I understand that if the above statement is false, I may be subject to sanctions by the Commission pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 30.

Dated at Burlington, Vermont, this 25th day of September, 2025.

/s/ Jeremy Owens

Jeremy B. Owens