

**STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

Case No.

Petition of Williston H Solar, LLC for a certificate of public good, pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 248 for a 2.75 MW ground-mounted solar array off Redmond Road in Williston, Vermont

**PREFILED TESTIMONY AND DECLARATION OF
JEREMY B. OWENS
ON BEHALF OF
WILLISTON H SOLAR, LLC**

This document and supporting exhibits have been filed ePUC

Summary of Testimony

Mr. Owens' testimony addresses the proposed Williston H Solar Project's compliance with aesthetics and scenic beauty (30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(5)), Rule 5.800, 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.

EXHIBITS

Exhibit WHS-JO-1

Resume

Exhibit WHS-JO-2

Aesthetic Analysis and Orderly Development Report

Introduction

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

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

Q2. What is your occupation?

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

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

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

1 Q4. What is the purpose of your testimony?

2 A4. My testimony addresses aesthetics (30 V.S.A § 248(b)(5); 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(8)),
3 compliance with Public Utility Commission Rule 5.800, and orderly development of the
4 region (30 V.S.A § 248(b)(1)), including municipal screening requirements. My testimony
5 presents the report titled “Williston H Solar–Aesthetic & Orderly Development Analysis
6 Report” (Report) for Williston H Solar, LLC’s (“Williston H Solar” or “WHS”) proposed
7 installation and operation of a 2.75 MW (AC) ground-mounted solar electric generation
8 facility located off Redmond Road in Williston, Vermont (the Project), which was prepared
9 under my direction. The Report describes the visual analysis undertaken by T.J. Boyle
10 Associates that assesses visual change due to the Project and determines whether these
11 changes create adverse or unduly adverse impacts to the visual character of the areas and
12 viewsheds through which they pass. The Report provides a detailed Project description and
13 is included with this filing as Exhibit WHS-JO-2. Included as appendices are:

14 Appendix A: Project Maps

15 Appendix B: Photographic Inventory

16 Appendix C: Project Cross-Sections

17 Appendix D: Regional and Town Plan Excerpts

18

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 Aesthetic & Orderly Development Analysis Report, which is attached here as Exhibit WHS-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 Regional Plan (Regional Plan) received an affirmative determination of energy compliance under 24 V.S.A. § 4352?

A6. Yes, as set forth in Exhibit WHS-JO-2, 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 the Williston Comprehensive Plan 2025-2033 (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 WHS-JO-2 addresses the terms contained therein, and considers
13 those provisions in relation to the Project. I conclude based on this analysis that the Project
14 complies with the Regional Plan and Regional Energy Plan because there are no clearly
15 applicable land conservation measures or specific policies contained in these Plans that
16 prevent development at the Project site. The Project does, however, support the Region’s
17 energy goals to have renewable energy sources meet 90% of the state’s total energy needs
18 by 2050.
19

20 With respect to the Town Plan and Williston Energy Plan dated August 19, 2025 (“Town
21 Energy Plan”), Exhibit WHS-JO-2 addresses the terms contained therein, and considers
22 those provisions in relation to the Project. Based on my analysis and the analysis performed

1 by Carla Fenner (see prefiled testimony and supporting exhibit of Carla Fenner), 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)) and Rule 5.800

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 WHS-JO-2.

20
21 Q10. Please summarize your assessment of the Project's aesthetic (visual) impacts.

22 A10. The assessment involved analysis of geographic information system data and viewsheds,
23 field investigation, review of topographic mapping, detailed design plans, and aerial

1 photography. Our assessment concluded that the proposed Project would not have an
2 adverse effect on the scenic or natural beauty or aesthetics of the area. The Project is well
3 located on an existing remote portion of the Project's parcel in an area that does not have
4 substantial off-site visibility from nearby public or privately accessible places. As such, the
5 Project does not require aesthetic mitigation measures.

6
7 In the event that the Public Utility Commission finds that the Project would be adverse
8 under the first part of the Quechee Test, a review of the Project under the second part of
9 the Quechee Test found that the Project's aesthetic impact would not be unduly adverse.
10 Based on the review of regional and town plans, the Project would not violate any clear
11 written community standard intended to preserve the aesthetics or scenic or natural beauty
12 of the area. The Petitioner has incorporated generally available mitigating steps, including
13 siting the Project in an area with limited visibility, retaining vegetation around the array,
14 and undergrounding electrical connections within the Project where feasible. The Project
15 would not offend the sensibilities of the average person due to the low profile and highly
16 limited visibility of the proposed array, as well as similarity to a nearby permitted solar
17 facility (yet to be constructed) as well as the nearby industrial buildings and equipment on
18 the Global Foundries property.

19
20 Q11. Will the Project have an undue adverse effect on aesthetics or scenic or natural beauty?

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

1

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

4 A12. No. While my review indicates that there are nearby buildings of historical significance,
5 my analysis contained in Exhibit WHS-JC-8 indicates that the Project will not be
6 substantially visible from either of these properties.

7

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

9 A13. Yes, it does.

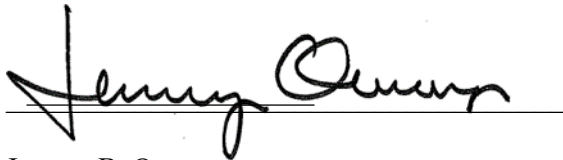
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WITNESS DECLARATION

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 6th day of November, 2025.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeremy Owens", is written over a horizontal line.

Jeremy B. Owens
Senior Landscape Architect
TJ Boyle & Assocs.
301 College St.
Burlington, VT 05401