



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
New England District

696 Virginia Road
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Public Notice

In Reply Refer to: Erika Mark
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Programs & Project Management Division

Date: May 1, 2017

Comment Period Closes: May 31, 2017

30 DAY PUBLIC NOTICE & PUBLIC MEETING

SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC PLANT INSTALLATION CAPE COD CANAL, BOURNE, MA

Interested parties are hereby notified under provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (implementing regulations in 40 CFR 1500-1508 and 33 CFR 230), that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New England District proposes to lease up to approximately six acres of the eight acre, government-owned property (referred to as “Midway”, see Attachment 1) to a private sector entity for the development, operation, and maintenance of a solar photovoltaic (PV) system. The energy produced by the solar PV system would provide the Cape Cod Canal Field Office (Canal) and the New Bedford Hurricane Protection Barrier (NBHB) a reliable source of renewable energy.

Character and Purpose of Work:

In the 2007 National Defense Authorization Act, Congress mandated that the Federal Government acquire 25% of its energy needs through renewable sources by 2025 (10 U.S.C. 2911 (e)). In response to this mandate, Secretary of the Army, John McHugh established the Army Energy Initiatives Task Force (now named Office of Energy Initiatives (OEI)) in September 2011. The OEI’s goal is to implement cost-effective, large-scale renewable energy projects, 10 megawatts (MW) or greater, at U.S. Army installations.

The purpose of the project is to provide the Canal (and its associated infrastructure) and NBHB with a secure and reliable renewable energy source. Both the Canal and NBHB are currently supplied with electricity from private sources. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2014, the Canal Office consumed approximately 1,010,000 Kilowatt Hours (kWh) of electricity at a cost of \$225,000. The NBHB consumed roughly 80,800 kWh of electricity at a cost of \$19,000. It is projected that the project will save the government \$180,000 annually after implementation. Currently, no percentage of electrical power purchased by the USACE for the Canal or the NBHB come from renewable sources.

The USACE identified two potential parcels along the Cape Cod Canal identified as the “Sagamore” and “Midway” sites (See Attachment 2) that had met the technical requirements for a

solar PV system. These two parcels are USACE-owned properties. After preliminary investigations, the Midway site was selected for this solar project.

Additional Information: Additional information may be obtained from Ms. Erika Mark, Project Management Branch, Programs & Project Management Division, at the above address or at (978) 318-8250.

Coordination: The proposed work is being coordinated with the following:

Federal

Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

State of Massachusetts

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management
Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Local Agencies

Town of Bourne

Tribal Nations

Mashpee Tribe
Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)

Environmental Impacts: An Environmental Assessment for the installation of the Solar PV system is being prepared and will be available for review upon request. I have made a preliminary determination that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required under the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. This determination will be reviewed in light of facts submitted in response to this notice.

Federal Consistency with the Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Program: I find that proposed project is consistent, to the maximum extent practicable, with the applicable management programs established as a result of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972. The lease of land for the purpose of construction, operation, and maintenance of a solar PV system will be conducted, to the maximum extent practicable, in a manner that is consistent with the approved management program.

Other Information:

- a. Endangered Species: In order to document the presence or absence of the Federally-listed, threatened northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) (NLEB) an acoustic survey was undertaken by North East Ecological Services (NEES) from late July to late August, 2016 at both prospective sites (Sagamore and Midway). In summation, the survey report detailed that bat activity was documented on each of the 33 sampling nights. There are no known bat hibernacula within the vicinity of the Midway site, and NEES did not document

any habitat features that would suggest the presence of any hibernacula for any bat species. Therefore, the bat activity at the Midway site likely represents summer transient populations and foraging within the area. It is our preliminary determination that the proposed project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect NLEBs. USACE will consult with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure that the proposed activity will not significantly affect NLEBs or any other species or critical habitat designated as endangered or threatened pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat. 844).

- b. Floodplain Management: In accordance with Executive Order 11988, the Corps of Engineers has determined that the proposed work will not contribute to negative impacts or damages caused by floods. The proposed project area is not located within a Federal Emergency Management Agency designated flood zone.
- c. Cultural Resources: This project is not anticipated to affect any cultural or archaeological features or resources and is being coordinated with the Massachusetts and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices.

Additional Requirements: A request for the State's concurrence with our determination of Federal consistency with Massachusetts' Coastal Zone Management Program will be submitted.

This Public Notice is intended to provide information and seek comments about our proposal to lease up to approximately six acres of government-owned property to a private sector entity for the development, operation, and maintenance of a solar PV system. The energy produced by the solar PV system would provide the Cape Cod Canal Field Office and the New Bedford Hurricane Protection Barrier a reliable source of renewable energy. Additional notices will be issued if the scope of work for future projects varies from that described herein. The decision whether to install this Solar PV system will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic values, fish and wildlife values, land use classification, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, air quality, energy needs, safety, considerations of property ownership and, in general the needs and welfare of the people.

The Corps plans to hold a public informational meeting on the proposed project on Tuesday, May 23, 2017 in the Oak Ridge School located at 260 Quaker Meeting Road in East Sandwich, Mass. Registration opens at 5:30 p.m. and the meeting will start at 6 p.m.

Please bring this notice to the attention of anyone you know to be interested in this project. Comments are invited from all interested parties and should be directed to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, 696 Virginia Road, Concord, MA 01742-2751, ATTN: Erika Mark, within 30 days of this notice.

1 MAY 17

Date



Christopher J. Barron
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Engineer

Attachment No. 1



Attachment No. 2

