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County Reply – Mandatory Review of Local Planning Action as per NYS General Municipal Law §239-l, m, &n

Local Referring Board: Town of Chester Planning Board

Applicant: Siemans-SunEdison

Project Name: Johnson Solar Farm

Proposed Action: Site Plan for installation of approximately 10 acres of ground-mounted photovoltaic cells producing approximately 2 megawatts of electricity

Reason for County Review: Within 500 feet of the Town of Chester/Town of Goshen boundary

Date of Full Statement: December 29, 2015

Referral ID #: CHT 10-15M

Tax Map #: 1-1-4

Local File #: none provided

Comments:

The Department has received the above referenced site plan and has found no evidence that significant intermunicipal or countywide impacts would result from its approval. We would like to offer the following advisory comments:

Professional Review: The proposed project has been reviewed for aesthetics and visual impact by the landscape architect for the Town of Chester Planning Board, Karen Arent. We would appreciate it if the Planning Board would include a copy of her report or letter for our file.

Environmental Impact: Although the proposed solar array will have no direct impact to the onsite federal wetlands or endangered or threatened species, according to the Habitat Suitability Assessment and Wetland Report prepared for this project by Ecological Solutions LLC, the removal of trees at the north end of the forested area may potentially increase surface runoff during storm events, thereby increasing soil erosion and siltation of nearby waterbodies. Additionally, the proposed solar array will cover approximately 10 acres that currently have no impervious surface. We therefore advise the Town to require green infrastructure/runoff reduction techniques for stormwater management on this project.

Solar Facility Regulations: The Town of Chester does not at this time include regulations for solar energy facilities in its zoning code. We encourage the Town to contact our office for resources, including model code language, if they choose to update their zoning code to include regulations for solar energy production.

County Recommendation: Local Determination

Date: December 30, 2015

Prepared by: Megan Tennermann, AICP, Planner

David Church, AICP

Commissioner of Planning

As per NYS General Municipal Law 239-m & n, within 30 days of municipal final action on the above referred project, the referring board must file a report of the final action taken with the County Planning Department. For such filing, please use the final action report form attached to this review or available on-line at www.orangecountygov.com/planning.