

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY
PURCHASE OF POWER GENERATED AT THE MARSHALL
PROPERTIES SOLAR FARM, UNION COUNTY, GEORGIA

TVA proposes to enter into a 20-year power purchase agreement (PPA) with Marshall Properties, LLC, under the Renewable Standard Offer program (RSO) for the electricity generated by the Marshall Properties solar farm, a 684-kilowatt direct current (DC) photovoltaic (PV) solar farm in Union County, Georgia.

The solar farm would be located on a 6.6-acre tract on T. Hughes Drive approximately 4 miles north north-west of Blairsville, Georgia. The site of the proposed solar farm is mostly former pasture with a small area of woodland. A 900-foot light-duty access road would be constructed from T. Hughes Drive to the site. The site would be cleared and the 200- by 500-foot area of the PV panels graded to a smoother slope. The cut and fill would be balanced onsite and a stormwater detention pond constructed in the southwest quadrant of the site. The 2,288 PV panels would be installed on fixed-mount ground-mounted metal racks arranged in parallel east-west rows. The racks would be supported by metal posts driven into the ground to a maximum depth of about six feet. Rack-mounted wiring would connect the PV panels to inverters, which would be connected by buried electrical wires to an onsite pad-mounted transformer. An above-ground power line would be constructed alongside the access road from the transformer to a connection point on the existing Blue Ridge Mountain Electric Membership Corporation distribution line adjacent to T. Hughes Drive. Once construction is completed the site would be revegetated with low-growing grasses. A small pre-fabricated equipment shed would be placed on the site and the site would be enclosed by a chain-link fence. Evergreen trees would be planted just outside the fence to provide a visual buffer. The site would be periodically mowed or grazed by sheep to prevent vegetation from growing tall enough to interfere with operation and maintenance of the PV facility.

The anticipated environmental impacts of TVA's proposed action of entering into the PPA, as well as those of the resulting construction and operation of the proposed solar farm, are the subject on an environmental assessment (EA) which is incorporated by reference. The EA evaluates two alternatives, i.e., the No Action Alternative and the Action Alternative. Under the No Action Alternative, TVA would not enter into the PPA and the solar farm would not be constructed. Under the Action Alternative, TVA would enter into the PPA and the solar farm would be constructed and operated as described above.

The construction of the proposed solar farm have negligible adverse effects on air quality and its operation would have a small beneficial effect on air quality, including reduced emissions of greenhouse gases, due to the generation of emissions-free electricity that would otherwise likely be generated in part by fossil fuels. No noise would be generated by operation of the solar farm; noise from construction and periodic maintenance would be short-term and not adversely affect nearby residents. No water bodies occur in the immediate vicinity and use of best management practices would minimize erosion or sedimentation during construction activities.

No impacts to surface waters or groundwater are anticipated. No wetlands or floodplains occur in the project area and the proposed action complies with Executive Orders 11988 on floodplain management and 11990 on wetlands.

The removal of vegetation from the solar farm site would displace most of the wildlife from the site. Although the impacts on plant and animal species on the site would be adverse, these species are common in the region and overall impacts would be minor and insignificant. No federally listed endangered or threatened species would be affected and the requirements of Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act have been met. Any impacts to state-listed endangered species would be minor and insignificant. Due to the terrain and the proposed vegetative screening, visual impacts would be negligible. The land use of the proposed solar farm site would change from rural agricultural to rural industrial; there are no applicable zoning regulations and insignificant effects to surrounding land uses. Impacts to soils, including prime farmland, would be insignificant. Socioeconomic impacts would be minor and beneficial, and there would be no disproportionate impacts to minority and low-income populations. No historic properties would be affected and TVA has notified the State Historic Preservation Office and federally recognized Indian tribes of this determination.

Mitigation

TVA has not identified the need for mitigation measures to reduce the anticipated environmental impacts.

Conclusion and Findings

Based on the findings in the EA, TVA concludes that the proposed action of entering into the PPA with Marshall Properties, and the subsequent construction and operation of the solar farm, would not be a major Federal action significantly affecting the environment. Accordingly, preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required.



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Date Signed