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# Spring Valley II Solar Project Environmental Impact Statement

## SCOPING REPORT

February 15, 2024

TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY



# Scoping Report Executive Summary

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## Summary

Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to assess the potential environmental effects of constructing, operating, maintaining, and decommissioning the proposed Spring Valley II Solar Project. The proposed solar photovoltaic (PV) facility would occupy approximately 943 acres of the 2,097-acre project study area, which is located entirely in Colbert County, Alabama. The land surplus is to accommodate relocating the arrays if any areas need to be avoided as a result of the environmental review. The project site is located south of the city limits of Tuscumbia, Alabama, near the City of Muscle Shoals and Florence, Alabama, along US Highway 43. The project site is a mixture of agricultural fields and forested areas. A map showing the project site is represented in Figure 1.

TVA produces or obtains electricity from a diverse portfolio of energy sources, including solar, hydroelectric, wind, biomass, fossil fuel, and nuclear. In June 2019, TVA completed an Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) and associated Environmental Impact Statement. The IRP identified the various resources that TVA intends to use to meet the energy needs of the TVA region over the 20-year planning period while achieving TVA's objectives to deliver reliable, low-cost, and cleaner energy while reducing environmental impacts. The 2019 IRP anticipates growth of solar in all scenarios analyzed, with most scenarios anticipating 5,000-8,000 MW and one anticipating up to 14,000 MW. TVA has begun the process of updating its IRP. With the demand for solar energy increasing, TVA has an expansion target of 10,000 MW of solar by 2035.

Customer demand for cleaner energy prompted TVA to release a Request for Proposal (RFP) for renewable energy resources. TVA is considering entering into a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with Spring Valley Solar, LLC to purchase 178 megawatts (MW) alternating current (AC) of power generated by the Project. This PPA will help TVA meet the needs for additional renewable energy in response to customer demands and to help fulfill the 10,000 MW by 2035 target. The PPA would be contingent upon the completion of an environmental review. The subject EIS will address the potential environmental effects associated with constructing, operating, maintaining, and decommissioning the proposed solar PV facility in order to inform TVA's decision-making and involve the public in it.

The EIS will assess a No Action Alternative, wherein TVA would not execute the PPA, and an Action Alternative, in which TVA would execute the PPA. In evaluating alternatives, TVA considered other solar proposals, prior to selecting the Spring Valley II site for further evaluation. Part of the screening process included a review of transmission options, including key connection points to TVA's transmission system. The Spring Valley II site stood out as a viable option for connectivity.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to consider the potential environmental consequences of their proposed actions. An EIS should provide full and fair discussion of significant environmental impacts and should inform decision makers and the public of reasonable alternatives that would avoid or minimize adverse impacts. TVA initiated a 30-day public scoping period on September 19, 2023, when it published a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register announcing its plan to prepare an EIS. The NOI solicited public comments concerning the scope of the EIS, alternatives being considered, and environmental issues that should be addressed as a part of the EIS. It also requested relevant data, information, and analysis. This scoping report presents the public comments received, as well as information on how the EIS is being developed.

During the scoping period, TVA received 43 comments in total, with comments from two federal agencies, two Alabama state representatives, one US Congressman, and one non-governmental organization. The comments, of which 95% were in opposition to the Project, mostly expressed concerns about the Belle Mont Mansion Property near the proposed site. Other comments related to consultation; cumulative impacts; alternatives; community impacts; cultural resources; environmental

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impacts; and the impacts of similar projects. This scoping report also includes information about NEPA, federal and local laws, and executive orders that are relevant to the proposed action.

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### Symbols, Acronyms, and Abbreviations

AC	Alternating Current
ADEM	Alabama Department of Environmental Management
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EO	Executive Order
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
IRP	Integrated Resource Plan
MW	Megawatt
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHA	Natural Heritage Area
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NHT	National Historic Trail
NOI	Notice of Intent
NPS	National Parks Service
PPA	Power Purchase Agreement
PV	Photovoltaic
RFP	Request for Proposal
TRTE	Trail of Tears National Historic Trail
TVA	Tennessee Valley Authority
USC	United States Code

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## 1 Background

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the purchase of electricity generated by the proposed Spring Valley II Solar Project in Colbert County, Alabama. The EIS will assess the potential environmental effects of constructing, operating, maintaining, and decommissioning the proposed 178-megawatt (MW) alternating current (AC) solar facility.

TVA is an agency and instrumentality of the United States, established by an act of Congress in 1933, to foster the social and economic welfare of the people of the Tennessee Valley region and to promote the proper use and conservation of the region's natural resources. One component of this mission is the generation, transmission, and sale of reliable and affordable electric energy.

TVA produces or obtains electricity from a diverse portfolio of energy sources, including solar, hydroelectric, wind, biomass, fossil fuel, and nuclear. In June 2019, TVA completed an Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) and associated Environmental Impact Statement. The IRP identified the various resources that TVA intends to use to meet the energy needs of the TVA region over the 20-year planning period while achieving TVA's objectives to deliver reliable, low-cost, and cleaner energy while reducing environmental impacts. The 2019 IRP anticipates growth of solar in all scenarios analyzed, with most scenarios anticipating 5,000-8,000 MW and one anticipating up to 14,000 MW. TVA has begun the process of updating its IRP. With the demand for solar energy increasing, TVA has an expansion target of 10,000 MW of solar by 2035.

As a result of the RFP, TVA is considering entering into a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with Spring Valley Solar, LLC to purchase 178 MW AC of power generated by the proposed Spring Valley II Solar Project. The proposed solar facility would occupy approximately 943 acres of the 1,629-acre project study area, which is located entirely in Colbert County, Alabama. The land surplus is to accommodate relocating the arrays if any areas need to be avoided as a result of the environmental review. The project site is located south of the city limits of Tusculumbia, Alabama, near the City of Muscle Shoals and Florence, Alabama, along US Highway 43. The project site is a mixture of agricultural fields and forested areas. Figure 1 depicts a map of the project site.

## 2 Purpose and Need

The Spring Valley II Solar Project that was submitted as a result of TVA's 2022 Carbon-Free RFP would help will help TVA meet the needs for additional renewable energy in response to customer demands and to help fulfill the 10,000 MW by 2035 target. To meet these goals, public scoping is integral to the process for implementing National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and ensures that (1) issues are identified early and properly studied, (2) issues of little significance do not consume substantial time and effort, and (3) the analysis of identified issues is thorough and balanced.

## 3 Proposed Alternatives

In addition to a No Action Alternative, TVA will evaluate the action alternative of purchasing power from the proposed Spring Valley II Solar Project under the terms of a PPA. In evaluating alternatives, TVA considered other solar proposals, prior to selecting the Spring Valley II site for further evaluation. Part of the screening process included a review of transmission options, including key connection points to TVA's transmission system. The Spring Valley II site stood out as a viable option for connectivity.

Environmental and cultural considerations are also included in TVA's screening. For the proposed site, the solar developer plans to consider the establishment of a footprint that could avoid impacts to cultural or biological resources. The EIS will also evaluate ways to mitigate impacts that cannot be

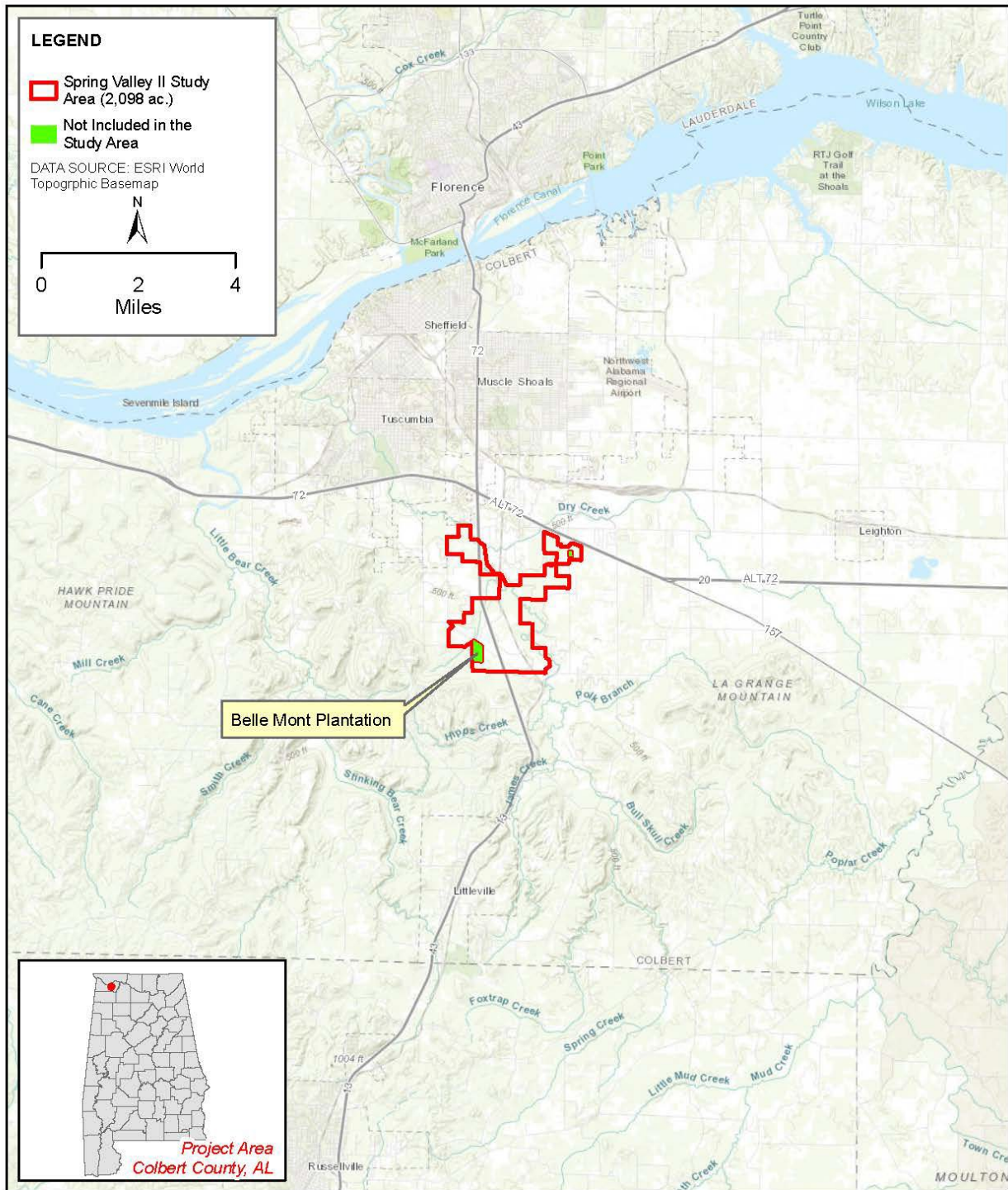
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avoided. The description and analysis of these alternatives in the EIS will inform decision makers, other agencies, and the public about the potential for environmental impacts associated with the proposed solar facility.



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SPRING VALLEY II  
PROJECT VICINITY

Figure 1

Figure 1. Map of the project area for the proposed action.



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### 4 Environmental Review Process

NEPA requires federal agencies to consider and study the potential environmental consequences of proposed actions. Actions, in this context, can include new and continuing activities that are conducted, financed, assisted, regulated or approved by federal agencies, as well as new or revised plans, policies or procedures. An EIS should provide full and fair discussion of significant environmental impacts and should inform decision makers and the public of reasonable alternatives that would avoid or minimize adverse impacts or enhance the quality of the human environment.

TVA is initiating the preparation of an EIS to assess the environmental impacts of the proposed action. TVA is using the input from the scoping period, summarized below, in developing the Draft EIS. The Draft EIS will be posted on TVA's website and will be distributed to interested individuals; groups; and federal, state and local agencies, including scoping participants, for their review and comment. The Draft EIS is expected to be released mid-2024. TVA anticipates the final EIS in mid-2025. Following the public comment period, TVA will respond to the comments received on the Draft EIS and incorporate any necessary changes into the final EIS. TVA will make a final decision regarding the proposed action no sooner than 30 days after the Final EIS is published.

#### 4.1 Applicable Federal Laws and Executive Orders

Several federal laws and executive orders are relevant to developing an EIS for the Proposed Action. Those that are specific to the natural, cultural and socioeconomic resources potentially affected by the Proposed Action are described below.

##### 4.1.1 National Environmental Policy Act

This EIS will be prepared by TVA in accordance with the NEPA of 1969 (42 United States Code [USC] §§ 4321 et seq.), regulations implementing NEPA promulgated by the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR Parts 1500 to 1508), and TVA NEPA procedures (18 CFR 1318). For major federal actions with the potential for significant environmental impacts, NEPA requires that an EIS be prepared. This process must include public involvement and analysis of a reasonable range of alternatives.

##### 4.1.2 Other Laws and Executive Orders

Several other laws and executive orders are relevant to the proposed action (Table 1). These laws and orders may affect the environmental consequences of an alternative plan, or measures needed during its implementation. Most of these laws also have associated implementing regulations. The Draft EIS will describe the regulatory setting for each resource in more detail.

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Table 1. Laws and Executive Orders Relevant to Proposed Action

Environmental Resource Area	Law / Executive Order
Prime Farmland	Farmland Protection Policy Act
Water Quality	Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) Administrative Code, Chapter 335-6 Clean Water Act EO 11988 – Floodplain Management EO 11990 – Protection of Wetlands Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Safe Drinking Water Act
Biological Resources	Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Administrative Code, Chapter 220-4 Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act Endangered Species Act EO 13112 – Invasive Species EO 13186 – Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds Migratory Bird Treaty Act
Air Quality & GHG Emissions	ADEM Administrative Code, Chapter 335-3 Clean Air Act
Cultural Resources	National Historic Preservation Act Archaeological Resource Protection Act Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act National Trails System Act
Waste Management	ADEM Administrative Code, Chapter 335-13 and 14 Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Solid Waste Disposal Act Toxic Substances Control Act
Public and Occupational Health and Safety	Occupational Safety and Health Act
Environmental Justice	Executive Order 12898 – Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations EO 13166 - Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency EO 14096 – Revitalizing Our Nation’s Commitment to Environmental Justice for All EO 13166 - Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency

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### 4.2 Environmental Resources to Be Considered in EIS

The EIS will contain descriptions of the existing environmental and socioeconomic resources within the area that could be affected by the proposed solar facility, including the documented historical, cultural, and environmental resources. Evaluation and analysis of potential environmental impacts to resources will include, but is not limited to:

- Air quality – Greenhouse gas emissions
- Water Resources – Surface water, groundwater, wetlands, floodplains
- Biological Resources – Vegetation, wildlife, aquatic life, threatened and endangered species
- Land resources – Land use, natural areas and parks and recreation, geology, soils, prime farmland
- Other Resources – Visual resources, noise, cultural resources, socioeconomics and environmental justice, solid and hazardous waste, public and occupational health and safety, utilities, and transportation

Based on a preliminary evaluation of these resources, potential impacts to vegetation and wildlife due to the conversion of forest of various ages to early maintained grass-dominated fields may occur. Impacts to water resources would likely be minor with the use of best management practices and avoidance of siting project components in or near streams, wetlands, and riparian areas to the extent feasible.

Land use would be impacted by the conversion of farmland to industrial use and the elimination of current farming operations, which would also result in visual impacts. A listed National Register of Historic Places property is located outside of the project footprint but in proximity and potential viewshed. Due to the location, there is a high probability of additional cultural resources to be present. Additional cultural resources surveys will be conducted to identify resources within the project area and viewshed and to assess effects.

Beneficial impacts are expected by facilitating the development of renewable energy and thereby increasing local job opportunities, as well as improving regional air quality and reducing carbon emissions. The EIS will analyze measures that would avoid, minimize, or mitigate identified environmental effects.

## 5 Public Outreach During Scoping Period

On September 19, 2023, a Notice of Intent (NOI) was published in the Federal Register announcing TVA's intent to prepare an EIS for the purchase of electricity generated by the proposed Spring Valley II Solar Project in Colbert County, Alabama (Appendix A). The NOI initiated a 30-day public scoping period, which concluded on October 19, 2023.

The NOI solicited public comments concerning the scope of the EIS, alternatives being considered, and environmental issues that should be addressed as a part of the EIS. It also requested data, information, and analysis relevant to the proposed action from the public; affected federal, state, tribal, and local governments, agencies, and offices; the scientific community; industry; or any other interested party.

Information about the project was made available on the TVA webpage at <https://www.tva.gov/nepa>, which included a link to an online public comment page.

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In addition to the NOI in the Federal Register, TVA sent notification of the NOI to local and state government entities and federal agencies; posted the news release on TVA's website; and issued a Project Media Release to the following:

- TV Broadcast outlets –
  - WHNT
  - WAFF
  - WZDX
  - WAAY
- Print/Digital outlets –
  - Moulton Advertiser
  - AL.com
  - Times Daily
  - Quad Cities Daily
  - Colbert County Reporter
  - Courier Journal
- Radio outlets –
  - WRNA

TVA participated in an interview on October 12, 2023, with Alabama Public Radio. TVA notified addresses within a 1-mile radius of the project site with a postcard describing the Scoping Period.

## 6 Summary of Public Scoping Comments

TVA received a total of 43 comments in total, of which 95% were in opposition, and most expressed concerns about the Belle Mont Mansion Property near the proposed site. Comments were received mostly from Alabama but there was also one commenter from Tennessee and one from Utah.

Of the 43 comments in total, 37 were general public comments, one comment was from a non-governmental organization (the Colbert County Historic Landmarks Foundation), two comments were from government entities, including the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Parks Service (NPS), and three comments were from elected officials, including two Alabama state representatives and one US Congressman. Comment submissions are included in Appendix B and summarized by topic below.

A large portion of comments addressing the Belle Mont historic site did not discuss impacts from the proposed action; instead citing facts about the land, events, significance, architecture and more that make the site unique. As these do not directly address how the proposed action will impact those things, those comments are not included in this summary.

### 6.1 General Comments

- Concern over this proposed solar panel project and its location.

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- The proposed amount of acreage under consideration would dwarf the acreage on which Belle Mont is situated.
- Concern that the project will not provide any lasting benefit for the area, especially when weighed against destruction of farmland and cultural sites.
- Concerns regarding the potential placement of solar panels on the property near to or on historic Belle Mont Mansion.
- Requests for information were received about the scope of the proposal and impacts to historic sites.
- Question about what will happen, and what will be the impacts to local residents after the facility has reached the end of its life.

### 6.1.1 Consultation

- The National Trails Office is available to advise on the designation and significance of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail (NHT), the routes of and resources along the trail, potential impacts of the project, and suggest mitigation measures.
- It may be appropriate for the NPS to be a consulting party under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).
- The NPS can provide further information related to its jurisdiction or special expertise to inform any future analysis.
- Request that the NPS be included in any applicable future correspondence for cultural resources.
- The Cherokee Nation Tribal Historic Preservation Officer is able to provide additional expertise regarding Trail of Tears National Historic Trail (TRTE) related resources and potential impacts as it pertains to Tribal concerns.

### 6.1.2 Opposition/Support

- General and strong opposition expressed.
- Colbert County does not need/want this.
- The project is bad for Colbert County and the Shoals area.
- The project is not economically viable for TVA or its customers.
- TVA customers do not want this inefficient type of clean energy and believe there are better options available to TVA.
- Belief that the solar panel farm will only negatively impact or have long-term negative effects on the Spring Valley area.
- Belief that solar farm will not produce enough electricity to justify its building.
- In support of the "No Action Alternative".
- Support the proposed solar energy development and its implementation.
- Support TVA's initiative to convert the Shawnee site into a solar farm.

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- The proposed solar energy project is a positive response to the climate crisis and the need to stop further fossil fuel development.

### 6.1.3 Cumulative Impacts

- Disclose and consider as part of the cumulative impact analysis whether and how other recently approved projects, concurrently proposed projects, or reasonably foreseeable actions may contribute to potentially significant impacts.
- Nearby solar projects should be considered in the cumulative effects analysis, along with other reasonably foreseeable actions; especially those that have the potential to affect TRTE and National Register properties and would also occur within the Muscle Shoals Natural Heritage Area (NHA).

### 6.1.4 Alternatives

- Site alternatives were suggested including TVA property that already has transmission lines in place and may be otherwise sold; re-establishing solar panels on the nearby reservation; putting the solar panels in a desert area; and conversion/possible use of the old Ford Motor Company plant off of Second Street in Muscle Shoals.
- Comments regarding the possibility of “better” alternative locations, both in and out of the state.
- Would like development to be completed away from major highways, thoroughfares and historic sites.

## 6.2 Community Impacts

- Concerns about which customers the energy produced at the proposed solar farm will serve and how much will benefit the residents of Colbert County.
- The proposed action would block the expansion of Tuscumbia, AL on two sides.
- The proposed action may impact community health, well-being, property values, or harm businesses.
- Concern that use of a foreign company for the project would result in poor stewardship of resources and diminish concerns related to local history.

### 6.2.1 Environmental Justice and Engagement

- Consider whether communities may already be experiencing existing pollution, social, economic, or health burdens and whether the proposed action may result in disproportionate impacts on those communities. If they exist, identify and address those impacts,
- The environmental document should identify and address any disproportionate impacts on people of color, indigenous, and low-income populations.
- Use EJScreen when conducting environmental justice scoping efforts.
- Use the Environmental Justice Interagency Working Group Promising Practices for Environmental Justice (EJ) Methodologies in NEPA Reviews (March 2016) to provide guiding principles in identifying disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority and low-income populations.

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- Meaningfully engage communities with EJ concerns and incorporate into the proposed project input, concerns, and engagement from communities affected.
- Document meaningful engagement with stakeholder groups.

### 6.2.2 Visual Resources and Tourism

- The continued use of farmlands and wooded areas for solar farms will negate the state motto of "Alabama the Beautiful."
- Solar farms are ugly/spoil the landscape.
- The project will directly affect the rural landscape of the shoals and deter visitors by becoming unwelcoming and unsightly.
- Putting the project in this location will detract from the aesthetic and cultural view of the present countryside adjacent to a historic location.
- Solar facilities adjacent to scenic byways or historic corridors may negatively impact the rural aesthetic along these transportation routes; the location needs to account for views from public rights-of-way.
- The infrastructure and security associated with solar panel sites can be unsightly and potentially dangerous.
- A solar farm could have a negative impact on overall tourism in the area.

### 6.2.3 Farmland

- Preparation and construction for solar panels will convert fertile farmland to unusable, non-producing wasteland.
- The natural farmland view shouldn't be destroyed by solar arm equipment.
- Barren land could be used instead of taking out prime farmland south of Tuscumbia.
- The acreage of farmland needed for solar panels is inefficient when compared to land use and energy output of other methods, such as natural gas turbines.
- Impacts to farmland that has been with some families for generations.

## 6.3 Cultural Resources

- Identify exclusions regarding cultural resources and tribal interests based on current, updated science.
- The Deas-Whiteley Route of the TRTE is within about one mile of the project and therefore may be affected.
- Take TRTE resources into account when evaluating the impact of the project.
- The project study area is within about two miles of The Oaks Plantation and the John and Archibald Christian House, which are historic properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places that may be affected by the project.
- Comply with NHPA Section 106 in the analysis for the project.
- The project would be located within the Muscle Shoals NHA and any potential impacts to the area should be addressed in the project evaluation.



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- Possible historical remnants on sites adjacent to Belle Mont, including Civil War history and signs of the Native Americans that once were there, may be impacted.
- The planning and proposal for the solar panels' construction encroaches on the surrounding area and burial ground for enslaved peoples, and which may therefore be impacted.

### 6.4 Belle Mont

- Concerns regarding what the impact might be to the historic site, Belle Mont, which is nearly surrounded by the proposed project, as shown on the map.
- The proposed project may have negative impacts to the museum and property, both directly and through construction and alternation of adjacent property.
- Concern on preserving the character, spirit, historical integrity, and image of Belle Mont given changes to its environment if the solar plant is built, as the land and structure are considered linked/one in the same.

#### 6.4.1 Community Impacts

- Events held at Belle Mont would be greatly affected by the solar farm, and ultimately cause the home to suffer.
- Multiple commenters remarked on concerns that the project would destroy “everything around the mansion”, citing its possible impacts to personal connections to Belle Mont and the surrounding property. These include people whose family had previous ownership, people who were born and raised near the mansion, people with childhood memories of the area, and people with other family connections to the land.
- The addition of solar farm facilities on land adjacent to and surrounding Belle Mont may be a detriment to school field trips experiences; Belle Mont's educational mission and community outreach; day-long programs and academic lectures on subjects relevant to the history of the region; and other activities and educational functions that benefit the general public and support local tourism.
- If the project were to be approved, the State of Alabama's conception of its holdings at Belle Mont would have to adjust to a new future reality.

#### 6.4.2 Tourism and Visual Resources

- Construction of the solar farm would be a detriment to Belle Mont tourism.
- Concern that if the solar farm is placed, Belle Mont will no longer be chosen for “special moments” such as weddings and will lose connection to those that already have those associations.
- The proposed project will infringe on the Belle Mont, the viewshed, and the surrounding countryside as well as the highway view, and should be under consideration as the project progresses.
- The proposed action will directly impact this historical site and impact the experience to visitors as the visual viewshed is significant to the experience at Belle Mont, making visiting less desirable.
- Solar Panels would be distracting and disrupting to the scenic view at the historic Belle Mont Mansion Museum and its grounds, impacting visitor experience.

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- The approach to Belle Mont will be impeded by the view of solar panels along the county road, affecting visitors' views as they enter and leave the property.
- The "Viewshed" of the adjacent land area in the proposed solar panel usage and construction would degrade the landscape scenery around the Belle Mont property.
- If the solar project were to be built, Belle Mont and its grounds would no longer be surrounded by vast farmland.

### 6.5 Environmental Impacts

- Identify exclusions for ecological resources based on current and updated science.
- The mining of minerals to make solar parts needs to be considered in its overall environmental impacts and its status as "green" energy.
- Regular maintenance could create chemical runoff that could contaminate Spring Creek, which runs into the Tennessee River.
- This proposed solar development would comprise a positive action in addressing the need for remedial action to combat climate change, which poses a worldwide threat.

#### 6.5.1 Wildlife

- Concerns about wildlife impacts.
- Wildlife will be displaced or habitat removed by construction on this location.
- Filling up the creek will change the habitat for fish and other animals that live there.
- Avoid any habitats for endangered or sensitive species or provide adequate mitigation for habitat losses.

#### 6.5.2 Energy and Waste

- Appreciate and respect the initiatives and goals of TVA to provide more cleaner energy and more electrical power, as part of a U.S. Government mandated Initiative.
- Concerns about batteries and the disposal of those batteries.
- TVA needs to become a leader in sustainable energy production, and this is a step in the right direction.

### 6.6 Examples

- Multiple comments addressed other example solar farms, their problems and expressed concern that the proposed action will do the same in Spring Valley.
- Other solar farms in the area have had negative impacts; fear this will be the same. Of repeated note, the Cherokee Solar Farm in Cherokee, AL.
- In the 1980s, ADEM came in and did testing in the area south of Spring Creek and bordering Highway 43 for a proposed landfill and found several areas of sinkholes that could feed into and contaminate the limestone aquifer that Tusculumbia and households with wells, pumps water from. The limestone surrounding the aquifer may have a crack leaving the water susceptible to contamination. ADEM denied the permit for a landfill in 1990.
- Clear cutting of the trees on Mulberry Lane has shown an increase in runoff during storms.

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### 7 Potential Mitigation Measures

TVA would implement minimization and mitigation measures in relation to resources potentially affected by the Project. These would be developed with consideration of best management practices (BMPs), permit requirements, and adherence to the Construction Best Management Practices Plan (CBMPP).

In association with the proposed electrical interconnection, TVA would employ standard practices and specific routine measures to avoid and minimize impacts to resources. Some comments received during the scoping period offered specific mitigation measures for the proposed action. During development of the EIS, TVA will consider implementation of the following minimization and mitigation measures in relation to potentially affected resources.

#### 7.1 General Mitigation

- Model for 100-and 500-year floods to ensure that key infrastructure, such as battery storage facilities, substations, and switchyards, are located outside of these vulnerable areas.
- The proposed solar PV array and associated infrastructure avoid and minimize, to the maximum extent practicable, the placement of fill into jurisdictional waters of the U.S., including wetlands and streams.
- Any contractor working on-site should use best management practices and address any potential impacts to off-site streams and waterways.
- Site grading, excavation, and construction plans are recommended to include implementable measures to prevent erosion and sediment runoff from the project site during and after construction.

#### 7.2 Visual Mitigation

- The location of any solar panels should be placed beyond an adequate "buffer zone" to minimize any visual impact that could negatively affect the Belle Mont site. This should also include consideration of the "field of view" from Belle Mont looking toward the eastern side of Highway 43, as this constitutes the main approach to the site.
- The visual impact of utility-scale solar facilities can be significantly minimized with effective screening and buffering.
- Buffering or screening may also be appropriate along main arterials or any public right-of-way, regardless of special scenic or historic designation.
- Sites should be effectively screened from view with substantial vegetative or other types of buffers.
- Berms can provide a screen, particularly if combined with appropriate vegetation.
- Screening and landscaping may be done to break up the farm with landscaping areas in between.
- Recommend major setbacks (i.e., 250 feet or more), landscape berms with planting on top, planting or screening to obstruct view, and limited or no access from Cook Lane.

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- Trees to reach 50 feet in height should be planted along the right of way at least every 40 feet with thick planting in between.

### **7.3 Belle Mont and Surrounding Area**

- Plans may be put in place that would protect the surrounding area and would mitigate negative impact to the character of the setting.
- Decisions can be made to protect [Belle Mont's] space and allow it to rest in its historic natural setting.

## Appendices

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### Appendix A – Federal Register Notice of Intent

## Appendices

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# B

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## Appendix B – Public and Agency Comments

