



P.O. BOX 298

CLEAR LAKE, MN 55319

PH (320)743-3111

EMAIL cityofclearlake@frontiernet.net

WEB www.clearlakemn.govoffice2.com

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place E., No. 350
St. Paul, MN 55101

Re: Letter of Support for the Sherco Solar Project in Sherburne County

Dear Commissioners,

This letter is submitted in support of the Sherco Solar Project, which is currently being developed by Geronimo Energy in Sherburne County. The members of the Clear Lake City Council believe the Sherco Solar Project represents cost-effective renewable energy generation, and we look forward to the project adding economic development to our region.

We believe this project will bring long-term financial benefit to the area. When it becomes operational, the Sherco Solar Project will generate production tax payments, a community education fund, and full-time jobs.

Clear Lake does not object to the development of the Urban Expansion District, zoned under the jurisdiction of Sherburne County, as a utility-scale solar development. The City recognizes the importance of the project to the landowners participating in the solar development and recognizes their desire to utilize the land for solar energy production.

We look forward to the expected economic benefits of the Sherco Solar Project and fully support the generation of clean, renewable energy that will benefit the local community.

Sincerely,

Tim Goenner, Mayor

Agency Responses

Clear Lake Township



CLEAR LAKE TOWNSHIP
P.O. BOX 305
CLEAR LAKE, MN 55319
WEBSITE: www.clearlaketownship.org
EMAIL: clearlaketwp@hotmail.com
PHONE: (320) 743-2472

November 24, 2020

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place E. #350
St. Paul, MN 55101

Re: Letter of Support for the Sherco Solar Project, Clear Lake Township, Minnesota

Dear Commissioners,

The members of the Clear Lake Township Board are writing to express their support for the 300+ megawatt (MW) Sherco Solar Project, which is currently being developed by National Grid Renewables in Sherburne County, Minnesota. We believe the Sherco Solar Project represents cost effective renewable energy generation, and we look forward to the Project adding economic development to our region.

We believe this project will bring a long-term financial benefit to the area. Once constructed, the Sherco Solar Project will provide a boost in the local economy through production tax payments to Sherburne County and Clear Lake Township, via the Project's charitable fund, and through the generation of both temporary and long-term full-time jobs.

We are excited that the project will bring clean renewable energy to our region while simultaneously benefiting the economy and the community.

Sincerely,

Gary H. Gray
Chairman

Lloyd "Bud" Stimmler
Vice-Chairman

Ross Imholte
Supervisor

From: [ClearLake Chairman](#)
To: [William Risse](#)
Subject: [External] township comments
Date: Monday, January 25, 2021 7:14:15 PM
Attachments: [Clear Lake Township Notification Letter Sherco Solar.pdf](#)

Mr. Risse, The Clear Lake Township board reviewed your letter dated January 15th, 2021 (attached), at our regular monthly board meeting held January 19th, 2021. The township board is still in full support the project as presented. The township board finds that the project has many beneficial attributes that will benefit the township and its residences. The township board has supported all solar projects that have come before them for the same reason and although this is much larger it will not be treated any differently. We find that the project will benefit the township financially through a production tax and an increase in property tax revenue. The environmental benefits of the project are many but the main one is that the project will provide the State of Minnesota with Clean renewable energy. We as a township board have strived to allow landowners to do what they wish with their land as long as it falls within the parameters of the regulatory authority. Once again, I will say that the Clear Lake Township board supports this project and all the benefits that come with it. If you need anything else in your permitting process, please feel free to reach out.

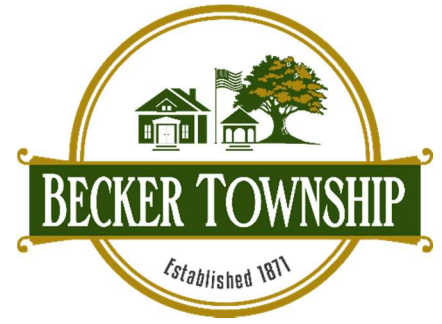
Thanks,

Gary Gray
Chairman, Clear Lake Township
<http://www.clearlaketownship.org/>

Agency Responses

Becker Township

February 3, 2021



Mr. William Risse, Permitting Specialist
National Grid Renewables
8400 Normandale Lake Boulevard, Suite 1200
Bloomington, MN 55437

RE: Sherco Solar Proposed Project

Mr. Risse,

Following receipt of your Notification of Proposed Project for Sherco Solar, Becker Township staff has reviewed the submittal with regard to the information you sought via email.

The list of properties (by P.I.D.) affected by the project does not match the exhibit provided showing the location of the entirety of the project, and this will need to be corrected as the approval processes can be impacted. For instance, one property listed but not shown on the exhibit as being within the project scope is zoned Industrial, a district which does not allow solar farms but does allow public utilities as a conditional use. However, with the information provided thus far, staff was able to ascertain the most significant impacts on Township properties, and can provide you with the information detailed in the following paragraphs.

The majority of the parcels in the project area are zoned Agricultural, which will necessitate approval of a Conditional Use Permit. Assuming approval of the Conditional Use Permit, building permits from Becker Township will likely be required prior to construction of any improvements. It appears that some of the parcels contain wetlands; if so, this will require a Land Use Permit approval from Sherburne County prior to those building permits being issued. The proposed substations are not located within the Township, so the submittal to the Township will not need to include detailed construction drawings of those facilities. However, staff will need clarification of the proposed uses at the end of the East Gen-tie routing area (which is also in an Agricultural zone), which could may require additional permitting. Excerpted language from the Township Zoning Ordinance related to requirements and processes for entitlements has been attached.

Generally speaking, the required materials as listed below must be submitted to the Township offices by the middle of the month prior to the month during which you wish to appear on the agenda of the Becker Township Planning Commission and the Becker Joint Planning Board. Once received, the materials will be reviewed to ensure completeness and if/when deemed a complete submittal, a public hearing notice will be published in advance of the next month's

meeting cycle, and owners of neighboring properties will be notified by mail. The Planning Commission meets on the second Monday of each month, while the Joint Planning Board meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month. These are the two board before which you must appear to gain approval of a Conditional Use Permit.

Please contact me with any questions or if you need more information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Wikstrom', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ben Wikstrom

Zoning Administrator

Becker Township

Direct: 612.801.7992

benwikstrom@gmail.com

Section 7. Agricultural

Subdivision 7.03. Conditional Uses

*Land in the Agricultural District may be used for any of the following purposes only with the issuance of a Conditional Use Permit. **Refer to Section 16 for additional Conditional Use Permit requirements.***

...

Solar Farms

Section 16. General Performance Standards

19. Solar Farms

Solar Farms shall be subject to the administrative requirements of *Section 20.05 of this Ordinance* and the following provisions:

- A. Stormwater management shall meet all Local, County, State and Federal requirements.
- B. Erosion and sediment control shall meet all Local, County, State and Federal requirements.
- C. Foundations. The manufacturer's engineer or another qualified engineer shall certify that the foundation and design of the solar panels is within accepted professional standards, given local soil and climate conditions.
- D. Other standards and codes. All solar farms shall be in compliance with any applicable local, state and federal regulatory standards, including the State of Minnesota Uniform Building Code, as amended; and the National Electric Code, as amended.
- E. Power and communication lines. Power and communication lines running between banks of solar panels and to electric substations or interconnections with buildings shall be buried underground. Exemptions may be granted by the Department in instances where shallow bedrock, water courses, or other elements of the natural landscape interfere with the ability to bury lines.
- F. Setbacks. Solar farms must meet the minimum building setback for the zoning district and be located a minimum of one hundred (100) feet from the property line.
- G. Application requirements. The following information shall be provided to the Town prior to issuance of the conditional use permit:
 - a. A site plan of existing conditions showing the following:
 - a. Existing property lines and property lines extending one hundred (100) feet from the exterior boundaries, including the names of the adjacent property owners and current use of those properties
 - b. Existing public and private roads, showing widths of the roads and any associated easements
 - c. Location and size of any abandoned wells, sewage treatment systems and dumps
 - d. Existing buildings and any impervious surface

- e. Topography at two (2) foot intervals and source of contour interval, unless determined otherwise by the Department. A contour map of the surrounding properties may also be required
- f. Existing vegetation (list type and percent of coverage; i.e. grassland, plowed field, wooded areas, etc.)
- g. Waterways, watercourses, lakes and public water wetlands
- h. Delineated wetland boundaries
- i. The one hundred (100)-year flood elevation and Regulatory Flood Protection Elevation, if available
- j. Floodway, flood fringe and/or general flood plain district boundary, if applicable
- k. The shoreland district boundary, if any portion of the project is located in a shoreland overlay district
- l. In the shoreland overlay district, the ordinary high water level and the highest known water level
- m. In the shoreland overlay district, the toe and top of any bluffs within the project boundaries
- n. Mapped soils according to the Sherburne County Soil Survey
- o. Surface water drainage patterns
- b. Site Plan of Proposed Conditions
 - a. Location and spacing of solar panels
 - b. Location of access roads
 - c. Planned location of underground or overhead electric lines connecting the solar farm to the building, substation or other electric load
 - d. New electrical equipment other than at the existing building or substation that is the connection point for the solar farm
 - e. Proposed erosion and sediment control measures
 - f. Proposed stormwater management measures as required
 - g. Sketch elevation of the premises accurately depicting the proposed solar energy conversion system and its relationship to structures on adjacent lots (if any);
- c. Manufacturer's specifications and recommended installation methods for all major equipment, including solar panels, mounting systems and foundations for poles or racks;
- d. The number of panels to be installed;
- e. A description of the method of connecting the array to a building or substation;
- f. A copy of the interconnection agreement with the local electric utility or a written explanation outlining why an interconnection agreement is not necessary;
- g. A decommissioning plan shall be required to ensure that facilities are properly removed after their useful life. Decommissioning of solar panels must occur in the event they are not in use for twelve (12) consecutive

months. The plan shall include provisions for removal of all structures and foundations, restoration of soil and vegetation and a plan ensuring financial resources will be available to fully decommission the site. Disposal of structures and/or foundations shall meet the provisions of the Sherburne County Solid Waste Ordinance in effect at the time of disposal. *Stearns County Solid Waste Ordinance Number*. The Joint Planning Board or Town Board may require the posting of a bond, letter of credit or the establishment of an escrow account to ensure proper decommissioning.

- h. Aviation Analysis. If the project is within two miles of an airport, the applicant must complete and provide the results of the Solar Glare Hazard Analysis Tool (SGHAT) for the Airport Traffic Control Tower cab and final approach paths, consistent with the Interim Policy, FAA Review of Solar Energy Projects on Federally Obligated Airports, or successor policy. The applicant must also complete the Air Space Case Analysis (Form 7460) and provide the results.
- i. Visual Impact Analysis. An analysis of the potential visual impacts from the project including solar panels, roads and fencing along with measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate the visual effects shall be required. A plan may be required showing vegetative screening or buffering of the system from those items to mitigate for visual impacts.

SUBDIVISION 20.05 CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS.

1. Conditional Use Permits shall run with the property for structures or other specified uses, as recommended by the Planning Commission after a public hearing and approved by the Town Board. All applications for a Conditional Use Permit shall be submitted to the Zoning Administrator 30 days ahead of the hearing date, accompanied by a certificate of survey (unless waived by the Zoning Administrator) showing the details of the proposal and an accurate legal description, along with the appropriate fee. The fee or contract owner of the property shall sign the application. The Zoning Administrator shall notify all property owners within a minimum of 500 feet by regular mail and shall advertise the hearing once in the legal section of the official newspaper at least 10 days ahead of the public hearing. The Zoning Administrator shall send the same notice at least 10 days in advance of this hearing to the DNR if the proposed is in the shoreland area.
2. Submissions for C.U.P. The applicant shall complete the Conditional Use Permit application approved by the Planning Commission. The application shall contain submittal requirements, criteria for approval, procedure for consideration and Town contact information. The Joint Planning Board shall not accept applications where the applicant has past due fees or charges due to the Town until the account is made current.

3. No Conditional Use Permit application shall be accepted by the Zoning Administrator from a contractor or property owner having outstanding violations. Conditional Use Permits can only be requested by contractors or property owners with outstanding violations upon resolution of the violation to the satisfaction of the Planning Commission.
4. In permitting a new Conditional Use or alteration of an existing Conditional Use, the Planning Commission may impose, in addition to the standards and requirements expressly specified by this Ordinance, additional conditions that the Planning Commission considers necessary to protect the best interest of the surrounding area or the Town as a whole.
5. The Planning and Zoning Commission shall decide the issue with consideration to the following:
 - a. The following must be met:
 - i. The use or development is an appropriate conditional use in the land use zone.
 - ii. The use or development, with conditions, conforms to the comprehensive land use plan.
 - iii. The use with condition is compatible with the existing neighborhood.
 - iv. The use with conditions would not be injurious to the public health, safety, welfare, decency, order, comfort, convenience, appearance or prosperity of the Town.
 - b. The following must be considered:
 - i. The conditional use should not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purpose permitted on that property, nor substantially diminish or impair values in the immediate vicinity.
 - ii. The conditional use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding vacant property for uses predominant in the area.
 - iii. The conditional requirements at public cost for public facilities and services and will not be detrimental to the economic welfare of the community.
 - iv. The conditional use will have vehicular approaches to the property which are so designed as not to create traffic congestion or an indifference with traffic on surrounding public thoroughfares.
 - v. Adequate measures have been taken to provide sufficient off-street parking and loading space to serve the proposed use.
 - vi. Adequate measures have been taken or will be taken to prevent or control offensive odor, fumes, dust, noise, and vibration, so none of these will

constitute a nuisance and to control lights and signs in such a manner, that no disturbance to neighboring properties will result.

- vii. The conditional use will not result in the destruction, loss or damage of a natural, scenic or historical feature of major significance.
 - viii. The conditional use will promote the prevention and control of pollution of the ground and surface waters including sedimentation and control of nutrients.
6. When costs to the Joint Planning Board involved in processing and reviewing an application exceeds the original application fees, the applicant shall reimburse the Town for any additional costs. Such expenses may include, but are not limited to, payroll, mailing costs, consultant fees and other professional services the Board may need to retain in reviewing applications.
 7. Violations of the conditions of a Conditional Use Permit shall automatically suspend the permit. A review of the violation shall be conducted by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission shall make a recommendation to the Joint Planning Board on conditions for reinstating the permit or for revocation. The Joint Planning Board shall make the final decision on reinstating or revoking the suspended permit.
 8. Failure by the owner to act on a Conditional Use Permit within 12 months, or failure to complete the work under a Conditional Use Permit within 2 years, unless extended by the Planning Commission, shall void the permit. A second extension shall require a new public hearing.
 9. Appeals from the action of the Town shall be filed with District Court within 30 days after final action.
 10. The Conditional Use Permit shall be filed with the County Recorder within 45 days.
 11. The Conditional Use Permit runs with the land and applies to subsequent purchasers of the land so long as the conditions are being met.

From: clerk@beckertownship.org
To: [William Risse](#)
Cc: [Melissa Schmit](#); ["Osendorf, Mark F"](#); ["Brixius, Aaron P"](#); ["Heine, Ellen L"](#); [Jordan B. Burmeister](#)
Subject: [External] Possible Spam (6.195):RE: Sherco Solar- Notification of Proposed Project
Date: Wednesday, February 3, 2021 5:15:32 PM
Attachments: [image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image007.png](#)
[image008.png](#)
[image009.png](#)
[image010.png](#)
[image011.png](#)
[image012.png](#)
[image013.png](#)
[image014.png](#)
[image015.png](#)
[image016.png](#)
[Sherco PID Response.pdf](#)
[Becker Township Notification Letter Sherco Solar.pdf](#)

William

Attached please find a response regarding the parcel IDs and zoning classification. If there is someone else that should receive a copy, please let me know.

There is a discrepancy in the Parcel ID's provided and the Exhibit included in the letter of 1/15/2021. I have attached a copy of that letter as there were two notifications that day (first in error, our letter is based on the one attached).

Thank you,

Lucinda Messman
Clerk, Becker Township
PO Box 248
12165 Hancock Street
Becker, MN 55308
www.beckertownship.org
T: 763.261.5301
F: 763.261.5303

From: William Risse [mailto:wrisse@nationalgridrenewables.com]
Sent: Tuesday, January 19, 2021 3:08 PM
To: clerk@beckertownship.org
Cc: [Melissa Schmit <melissa@nationalgridrenewables.com>](mailto:melissa@nationalgridrenewables.com); [Osendorf, Mark F <mark.f.osendorf@xcelenergy.com>](mailto:mark.f.osendorf@xcelenergy.com); [Brixius, Aaron P <Aaron.P.Brixius@xcelenergy.com>](mailto:Aaron.P.Brixius@xcelenergy.com); [Heine, Ellen L <Ellen.L.Heine@xcelenergy.com>](mailto:Ellen.L.Heine@xcelenergy.com); [Jordan B. Burmeister <jordan@nationalgridrenewables.com>](mailto:jordan@nationalgridrenewables.com)
Subject: RE: Sherco Solar- Notification of Proposed Project

Hello Lucinda,

In light of this letter, we wanted to follow up to your previous request regarding the parcel IDs that are included within Becker Township that are a part of this Project. I apologize for the delay as we were internally working out the details of this new combined effort between NG Renewables and Xcel Energy. Our understanding is that you sent the same request regarding parcel IDs to both NG Renewables as well as Xcel Energy. We would also like to extend an offer for us to present (virtual preferred given the pandemic) to township officials regarding this Project, and provide you with our understanding of the state siting process and our plans for submittal to the state.

In regards to your inquiry regarding parcel IDs. The following parcel IDs are included within the Project and sited in the township:

Parcels participating in the Solar Project:

05-005-3000
05-007-1000
05-007-4105
05-008-1101
05-008-2101
05-008-2201
05-008-3000
05-008-4000
05-016-1400
05-016-2101
05-016-2200
05-016-2401
05-016-3101
05-016-3401
05-016-4100
05-017-1000
05-017-2101
05-017-2201
05-017-4101
05-017-4400
60-007-2100
60-007-2101
60-007-2105
60-007-2400

Parcels that contain the west transmission line route in the township:

05-326-3400
05-326-3401
05-326-3402
05-326-4400
60-325-3200

Parcels that contain the east transmission line route in the township:
05-007-1000

Please reach out with any other questions. We look forward to keeping you up to date regarding the Project.

-William



William Risse
Permitting Specialist

P 952.300.9476

952.988.9000



From: William Risse <wrisse@nationalgridrenewables.com>

Sent: Friday, January 15, 2021 3:48 PM

To: benwikstrom@gmail.com; clerk@beckertownship.org

Cc: Melissa Schmit <melissa@nationalgridrenewables.com>; Osendorf, Mark F <mark.f.osendorf@xcelenergy.com>; Brixius, Aaron P <Aaron.P.Brixius@xcelenergy.com>

Subject: RE: Sherco Solar- Notification of Proposed Project

Dear Becker Township Board of Officers and Staff,

My apologies, I previously provided incorrect map information in my recent correspondence. You previously received a letter in December 2020 regarding a proposed solar project in Sherburne County. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with an update on the project. Please find attached letter regarding the proposed Sherco Solar Project, located in Sherburne County, Minnesota. The purpose of this letter is to inform your organization of the proposed Project, seek your input regarding any permits and approvals that may be required, and identify interests your organization may have in the Project site or associated study area. We welcome any comments your agency may have at this time and throughout the permit application process. Any written agency comments provided in response to this letter will be incorporated into the PUC's review process.

Regards,

-William



William Risse
Permitting Specialist

P 952.300.9476

952.988.9000



From: William Risse <wrisse@nationalgridrenewables.com>
Sent: Friday, January 15, 2021 3:29 PM
To: benwikstrom@gmail.com; clerk@beckertownship.org
Cc: Melissa Schmit <melissa@nationalgridrenewables.com>; Osendorf, Mark F <mark.f.osendorf@xcelenergy.com>; Brixius, Aaron P <Aaron.P.Brixius@xcelenergy.com>
Subject: Sherco Solar- Notification of Proposed Project

Dear Becker Township Board of Officers and Staff,

You previously received a letter in December 2020 regarding a proposed solar project in Sherburne County. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with an update on the project. Please find attached letter regarding the proposed Sherco Solar Project, located in Sherburne County, Minnesota. The purpose of this letter is to inform your organization of the proposed Project, seek your input regarding any permits and approvals that may be required, and identify interests your organization may have in the Project site or associated study area. We welcome any comments your agency may have at this time and throughout the permit application process. Any written agency comments provided in response to this letter will be incorporated into the PUC's review process.

Regards,
-William



952.988.9000



William Risse
Permitting Specialist

P 952.300.9476

E wrisse@nationalgridrenewables.com

8400 Normandale Lake Boulevard, Suite 1200 | Bloomington, MN 55437