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May 25, 2023

Jenna Ness, Environmental Review Manager  
Minnesota Department of Commerce  
85 7th Place East, Suite 280  
St. Paul MN 55101

RE: In the Matter of the Applications of Lake Wilson Solar Energy LLC for a Certificate of Need and Site Permit for the up to 150 MW Lake Wilson Solar and Associated Battery Storage Project in Murray County, Minnesota  
PUC Docket Numbers: IP-7070/CN-21-791 and IP-7070/GS-21-792

Dear Ms. Ness,

On April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) and the Minnesota Department of Commerce (DOC) issued a Notice of Public Information and Environmental Assessment Scoping Meeting on the applications of Lake Wilson Solar Energy LLC (Applicant) for a certificate of need and a site permit to construct and operate the proposed Lake Wilson Solar Energy Center Project, an up to 150-megawatt solar energy generating system with associated battery storage to be located in Chanarambie and Leeds townships, Murray County, Minnesota. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) has reviewed the application regarding the proposed project and submits the following comments in response to the Notice.

Overall, potential impacts that MnDOT may incur from the Lake Wilson Solar Energy Center Project look to be quite minimal. MnDOT views solar generating projects as it would any other private commercial venture and does not consider a solar generating project to be a public utility for transportation purposes. Except for collection line crossings and associated gen-tie line(s) connecting to a substation, any MnDOT land that Lake Wilson Solar may wish to occupy would need to be leased (in the areas where a lease is feasible).

Given the project's proximity to MnDOT trunk highway (TH) 30, the Applicant should ensure that their efforts to mitigate soil impacts and erosion control, and that the location of stormwater runoff ponds will not negatively impact existing land and infrastructure surrounding the project area. A MnDOT District Hydraulics Engineer may need to review the project to determine if a drainage permit is needed - [Application for Drainage Permit \(PDF\)](#). A drainage permit is needed for all types of drainage changes on trunk highway right-of-way.

As stated in Table 3 of the Application, the Applicant will not be applying for Utility Accommodation or Access (Driveway) permits as there is no expectation that these types of permits will be required from MnDOT. Oversize/Overweight (OSOW) permits may be needed and information regarding OSOW permitting can be found here: [MnDOT CVO OSOW Permits](#).

Because MnDOT's highway construction activities could impact project construction and plans to haul oversize loads to the proposed site, the Applicant will need to coordinate with MnDOT when planning such loads. These projects can change and therefore, the applicant should regularly check the MnDOT website at [D8 Planning](#) to remain up to date on the latest project information.

Should the Commission issue a Site Permit for the Lake Wilson Solar Energy Center Project, early coordination with MnDOT staff is encouraged, if applicable. Any MnDOT permits applied for as a part of these projects will not be issued until the PUC has issued an approved site permit for this project. All applicable permitting, traffic control and construction coordination efforts should be made through Jeff Illies, MnDOT District 8 Engineering Specialist at [jeff.illies@state.mn.us](mailto:jeff.illies@state.mn.us) or 320-214-6317. MnDOT District Specialists should be given the opportunity to participate in pre-construction meetings as they apply to MnDOT owned property.

MnDOT has a continuing interest in working with all parties to ensure that possible impacts to the state transportation system are adequately addressed. MnDOT appreciates the opportunity to participate in the development of the scope of the environmental assessment.

Sincerely,

***Stacy Kotch Egstad***

Utility Routing and Siting Coordinator  
Minnesota Department of Transportation  
Office of Land Management  
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cc: Jeff Illies – MnDOT District 8

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