

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AND COMMENT PERIOD

Issued: *June 29, 2020*

In the Matter of the Applications of Elk Creek Solar, LLC for a Certificate of Need and a Site Permit for the up to 80 MW Elk Creek Solar Project in Rock County, Minnesota

Public Utilities Commission (PUC) Docket Numbers: IP7009/CN-19-351 (Certificate of Need)
IP7009/GS-19-495 (Site Permit)
Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) Docket Number: OAH 71-2500-36619

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) will hold a remote-access public hearing on the certificate of need and site permit applications of Elk Creek Solar, LLC (Elk Creek) for its proposed 80 megawatt (MW) photovoltaic solar energy conversion project in Rock County, Minnesota. **Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission has suspended in-person meetings and hearings. The Commission is using remote-access technology to conduct meetings and hearings to ensure continued public participation and information sharing opportunities.** The remote-access public hearing will be held on the following date and time:

Date: Thursday, July 23, 2020
Time: 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.*
Location: Remote-Access Hearing (telephone and/or internet)

*The hearing will end when all attendees have had the opportunity to comment and all other business has been concluded. This may occur before the stated end time for the public hearing. If you wish to participate, you are encouraged to join the hearing when it begins.

A portion of the public hearing will be reserved for taking questions and comments. To participate, follow the directions below to access the hearing over the telephone to listen or provide verbal comments (audio only). If you are also interested in accessing the video portion of the hearing, follow the directions below to view the presentation over the internet (video only – no audio). If you wish to watch the video stream with audio, you will need to join by both phone and internet. Written comments may also be submitted during the comment period following the hearing using the methods described in this notice.

Join the hearing by telephone

Phone: (800) 374-0221
Conference ID: 6151866
An operator will assist you.

To view the presentation, join the hearing by internet (video only – no audio)

Navigate on your computer to: <https://tinyurl.com/yd988x7j> or
<https://minnesota.webex.com>
Event Number: 146 468 0999
Event Password: SefBH4XjP25

Please join the hearing 5-10 minutes prior to the start time.

Please contact Charley Bruce at 651-201-2251 or publicadvisor.puc@state.mn.us, if you have questions on how to participate or have trouble participating.

To find out if the hearing is canceled call 1-855-731-6208 or 651-201-2213 or visit mn.gov/puc.

Information on the application review process and documents related to the proposed project including materials from the public hearing, the site permit application, and the environmental assessment are available on the Department of Commerce website: <https://mn.gov/eera/web/project/13739/> and the Commission's website at mn.gov/puc, select *eDockets*, enter the year (19) and the docket number (495), and select *Search*. You may also find information on the certificate of need at the same address by entering the year (19) and docket number (351) and selecting *Search*.

Project Description

Elk Creek proposes to construct the Elk Creek Solar Project (Project), a solar energy conversion facility with an 80-megawatt (MW) alternating current (AC) nameplate capacity, in Vienna Township, Rock County, Minnesota.

Elk Creek filed a certificate of need application with the Commission on September 16, 2019. On behalf of the Commission, the Department of Commerce Energy Environmental Review and Analysis unit has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) of the project. The EA describes the human and environmental impacts of the project and methods to mitigate potential impacts.

Elk Creek also submitted a site permit application under the alternative review process (Minnesota Statute 216E.04; Minnesota Rule 7850.2800-3900). Elk Creek proposes to construct the Elk Creek Solar Project (Project), a solar energy conversion facility with an 80-megawatt (MW) AC nameplate capacity, in Vienna Township, Rock County, Minnesota.

Public Hearing and Process Information

The purpose of the public hearing is to obtain public input on the proposed project and compile the record for the Commission to consider in making a final decision on the site permit application. The Honorable Jessica Palmer-Denig, Administrative Law Judge, will administer the hearing and will provide the Commission with a summary of the public comments received during this proceeding. The public hearing and written comment period afford interested persons the opportunity to ask questions of the applicant and agency staff and to offer oral and written comments on the merits of the proposed project, on the environmental assessment, and on conditions to be considered for inclusion in a site permit. The public hearing is being conducted in accordance with the requirements of Minn. Stat. §§ 216B.243, Subd. 4, 216E.03, Subd. 6 and 216E.04, and Minn. R. 7850.3800.

Minnesota Statutes and Rules. This CN application for this project is being reviewed under Minnesota Statutes chapter 216B.243 and Minnesota Rules chapter 7849. The site permit application is being reviewed under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 216E and Minnesota Rules chapter 7850. The rules and statutes are available for review at: www.revisor.mn.gov.

Written Comment Period

Written comments will be accepted through **August 10, 2020, by 4:30 p.m.** Please include the docket number (19-495) in all communications. Comments received after the close of the comment period may or may not be considered by the Commission.

Please focus your comments on information that will help answer the following questions:

- Should the Commission grant a certificate of need and site permit for the proposed project?
- Is the proposed project needed and in the public interest?
- What are the human and environmental impacts of the project, and how can these impacts be addressed in the site permit?
- If a site permit is granted, what additional conditions or requirements should be included in a site permit for the facility?
- Are there other project-related issues or concerns?

Comments may be submitted via:

Online: Visit mn.gov/puc, select *Comment* and follow the prompts.

Email: publicadvisor.puc@state.mn.us

U.S. Mail: Public Advisor – Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place East, Suite 350
St. Paul, MN 55101

Important. Comments will be made available to the public via the Commission's website, except in limited circumstances consistent with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. The Commission does not edit or delete personal identifying information from submissions.

Additional Information

Filing Requirements. Utilities, telecommunications carriers, official parties, and state agencies are required to file documents using the Commission's electronic filing system (eFiling):
<https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling>.

Full Case Record. Documents related to the certificate of need and site permit applications for the proposed project including materials from the public hearing, the site permit application, and the environmental assessment are available on the Commission's website at mn.gov/puc, select *eDockets*, enter the year (19) and the docket number (351 or 495), and select *Search*. You may also find information specific to the site permit application and the environmental assessment on the Department of Commerce website: <https://mn.gov/eera/web/project/13739>.

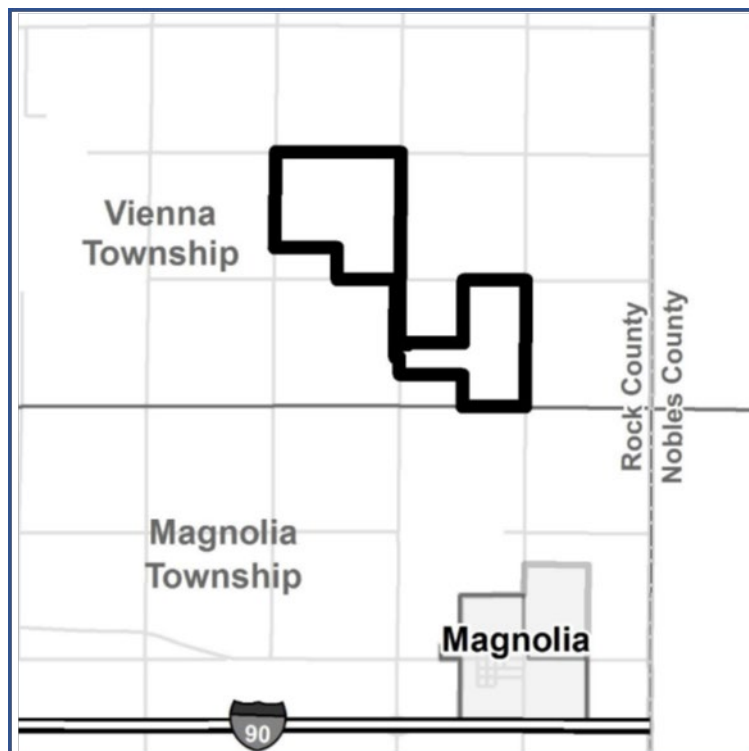
Subscribe to the Docket. To receive email notification when new documents are filed in this matter visit: <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling>, select *Subscribe to Dockets* and follow the prompts.

Project Mailing List. Sign up to receive notices about project milestones and opportunities to participate or change your mailing preference. Email docketing.puc@state.mn.us or call Leesa Norton at 651-201-2246 with the docket number (19-351 or 19-495), your name, mailing address, and email address.

Questions about these dockets or Commission process and procedure? Contact Commission staff, Michael Kaluzniak at mike.kaluzniak@state.mn.us or 651-201-2257 or Charley Bruce, Public Advisor, at publicadvisor.puc@state.mn.us or 651-201-2251.

If any reasonable accommodation is needed to enable you to fully participate in this hearing, please contact the Commission at 651-296-0406 or 1-800-657-3782 at least one week in advance of the hearing.

To request this document in another format such as large print or audio, call 651.296.0406 (voice). Persons with a hearing or speech impairment may call using their preferred Telecommunications Relay Service or email consumer.puc@state.mn.us for assistance.



ELK CREEK SOLAR PROJECT LOCATION