

December 22, 2020

Via Email

RE: Public Scoping for an Environmental Assessment  
Western Solar Development  
Washington Dulles International Airport, Loudoun County, Virginia

To whom it may concern:

The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (Airports Authority) is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to disclose the potential environmental effects associated with the Western Solar Development (Proposed Action) at Washington Dulles International Airport (Airport). Exhibit 1 illustrates the location of the Airport and Exhibit 2 illustrates the proposed project location. The Proposed Action would advance the development of undeveloped and unused Airport property in order to generate non-aeronautical revenue for the Airport and to fulfill Airports Authority sustainability commitments to “lessen the impacts of the aviation industry on the environment.”<sup>1</sup>

The Airports Authority is working with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to prepare the EA in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations 1500-1509); FAA Order 1050.1F, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*; and FAA Order 5050.4B, *National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Implementing Instructions for Airport Actions*.

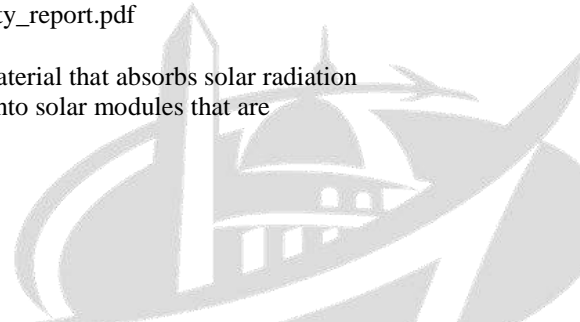
The Proposed Action includes the construction of a large-scale solar photovoltaic (PV) system on approximately 1,400 acres located on the southwestern side of the Airport. The proposed solar facility would consist of a series of solar PV arrays, with panels containing approximately 300,000 to 400,000 solar PV modules to provide approximately 100 megawatts of electrical energy to the public power grid.<sup>2</sup> Components of the Proposed Action would include associated support structures, an energy storage system, infrastructure, equipment, and access roads necessary to support the proposed solar facility. Components of the Proposed Action would be constructed and operated by Dominion Energy.

The Airport is currently owned by the US Department of Transportation and leased to the Airports Authority. As part of the Proposed Action, the Airports Authority, as lessee and operator of the Airport, would request FAA approval to release the 1,400 acres from federal obligations to maintain aeronautical uses through a sublease of the 1,400-acre property to Dominion Energy for

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<sup>1</sup> Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, *2019 Corporate Social Responsibility Report*, n.d., [https://www.mwaa.com/sites/default/files/2019\\_corporate\\_social\\_responsibility\\_report.pdf](https://www.mwaa.com/sites/default/files/2019_corporate_social_responsibility_report.pdf) (accessed July 27, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> The basic unit in a solar PV system is a solar cell made up of semiconductor material that absorbs solar radiation and converts solar radiation to an electrical current. Solar cells are combined into solar modules that are assembled into solar panels. A series of panels comprises a solar PV array.



construction and use as the solar facility. The Proposed Action is depicted on Exhibit 3. The proposed Study Area for analysis is provided on Exhibit 4.

Construction of the Proposed Action is scheduled to begin in Spring 2022 and be completed in Fall 2023. The construction timeframe is subject to completing the federal environmental review process, obtaining all environmental permits, and completing the design.

This notification is sent as part of the process to determine the scope of issues to be addressed in the EA and specifically to:

1. advise your agency or organization of the preparation of the EA;
2. request any relevant information that your agency or organization may have regarding the Study Area; and
3. solicit early comments regarding potential issues to consider as the EA is prepared.

The EA will include an assessment of historic and archeological resources potentially affected by the Proposed Action consistent with provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (as amended) and pursuant to the terms of the Airports Authority's Programmatic Memorandum of Agreement (PA). Consultation pursuant to the PA will be conducted separate from, but concurrent with, the EA. Public review requirements under the PA will be satisfied through the EA. This letter serves as notification that the Airports Authority is initiating consultation under the PA and has begun the NEPA compliance process.

The Airports Authority will host a public scoping meeting **January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021** from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the meeting will be held virtually for the health and safety of the public, using a web-based application. The meeting will provide information on the proposed improvements and to solicit comments from the public. This meeting will begin with a presentation of the Proposed Action. Relevant graphics will be on display throughout the meeting. The Airports Authority staff and the Consultant Team will be available to answer questions after the presentation. A public notice for this meeting will be posted on the Environmental Information section of the Airports Authority website (provided below) and in The Loudoun Times-Mirror. An invitation to this meeting will be provided in a separate email. A follow-up reminder will be sent out as we get closer to the meeting date. For additional information on the meeting, please feel free to contact Tom Wasaff at 703-572-0268. The virtual meeting can be attended via the following link:

<https://mwaa.zoom.us/j/86205208476?pwd=YWpiZTlMbGprd2JQSjl6THRzTUZkQT09>  
Password: 818541

Organization representatives and members of the public unable to attend the virtual scoping meetings may contact the Airports Authority to receive a copy of presentation materials. Additionally, public meeting materials will be made available under the Environmental Information section of the Airports Authority website:

<https://www.mwaa.com/about/environmental-information>

If you would like to provide any written information or comments, please send them to the contact information below, along with a return mailing and email address so that you can be notified as information about the Proposed Action becomes available. To discuss and address concerns, written correspondence is requested by **February 1, 2021**.

Tom Wasaff  
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Sincerely,



Gregg M. Wollard, P.E., P.M.P  
Manager, Planning Department

Attachments:

- Exhibit 1 – Airport Location Map
- Exhibit 2 – Proposed Project Location
- Exhibit 3 – Proposed Action
- Exhibit 4 – Study Area