

New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee  
21 South Fruit Street, Suite 10  
Concord, NH 03301  
[admin@sec.nh.gov](mailto:admin@sec.nh.gov)

Re: Chariot Solar Project Docket No. 2021-04  
ATTN: Daniel C. Goldner, Chairman, Site Evaluation Committee and Commissioner, Public Utilities Commission.

Dear Chairman Goldner and the Site Evaluation Committee,

Please accept my preliminary comments regarding the Chariot Solar Project proposed by NextEra..

This project has not yet been submitted to you. The pre-application public information session was held on October 18, 2021. I attended this meeting. On May 24, 2022 the developer notified the Siting Board of a delay for submitting its application.

I have contacted various New Hampshire State agencies and was told there were no studies or reports submitted by NextEra at this time. I contacted NextEra directly for information on this project, and my requests were not answered or acknowledged.

I have included two news articles and have attached photos that I took at the October 18, 2021 meeting in Hinsdale. The description provided is from my notes from the meeting and the news articles.

**Background and Description of Project:** A proposed 50 Megawatt solar array located in Hinsdale, New Hampshire. The project would be comprised of nine separate arrays totaling 260 acres with 140,000 panels. 245 of forested acres would be clear cut. Other land includes two fields. A large swath of land divided by Lipscomb Brook, which flows into the Connecticut River. Each parcel will be surrounded by fencing with a six-inch gap underneath for small animal wildlife movement and other wildlife would move among the fenced in arrays.

Buffers around delineated wetlands and vernal pools are minimal.

The land currently has been managed for forestry.

After 20 years the property would be returned to its previous state.

The arrays are arranged around wetlands, streams and vernal pools. The area of Lipscomb Brook is Highest Ranked Habitat in New Hampshire. The project would be located on land that is Highest Ranked Habitat in the Biological Region, and Supporting Landscapes (1). List of potential sensitive species is listed by New Hampshire Fish and Game (2).

The project is located in close proximity to both Pisgah State Park (13,300 acres) and Mount Wantastiquet State Forest ( 520 acres) . The boundary of Pisgah State Park is directly across the Road from the project. Arrays surround Lipscomb Brook close to where the Brook empties into the Connecticut River.

The electricity is contracted to be sold to thirteen towns in Massachusetts, arranged by the developer. Those towns are using a Massachusetts aggregate buying program to purchase electricity at a cheaper rate than what New Hampshire residents pay.

“On Monday night, NextEra Energy, with more than 40 solar arrays in 38 states, presented its plan for a 50-megawatt array, [Chariot Solar](#), which would produce enough electricity for 7,000 homes. However, all 7,000 homes receiving power from the array would be in 13 towns in Massachusetts. We have already executed power purchase agreements,” said Kaleigh Crissman, project manager. According to [documents found online](#), one of the participants is Bellingham, Mass., which will receive electricity at a little more than 10 cents per kilowatt hour. Currently, the rate in Massachusetts is a little less than 23 cents per kilowatt hour. In New Hampshire, the current rate is about 19 cents per kilowatt hour.” ( 1- Brattleboro Reformer, October 19, 2021).

And the selling points to those towns includes assuring the towns that this is “green” energy, without betraying the likely negative environmental impacts. ( 3- Nextera aggregate program)

### **My comments address these Areas of Concern**

Environment of the state

Use of Natural Resources

Public Health and Safety

New Hampshire currently is not subsidizing large scale solar. Both Chariot Solar in Hinsdale and the abandoned large solar project in Fitzwilliam were contracting with out of state buyers for the projects built in New Hampshire. In these cases, the benefits to New Hampshire are almost nothing. Buying solar panels from outside of the U.S. is not in and of itself a positive for New Hampshire. There would be jobs for the solar installation, but they will be temporary and not necessarily for New Hampshire residents. The Town of Hinsdale and the land owners would be paid to host the project, but the payment to the town amounts to \$150.00 per annum per resident which is a very small compensation for the environmental degradation that the town will suffer.

Other than some very small economic upsides, this project is a net detriment to New Hampshire. The land that will be degraded is priority habitat, provides water to private wells, and impacts wildlife in a large forested and undeveloped area. The decommissioning plan is to return the area to its former state. It will be impossible to re-create a forest when and if the panels are removed. The area will be clear cut, soil will be compacted, streams and wetlands will inevitably be harmed, and the area will likely host a plethora of invasive plant and other species. This is only a partial list of what happens when a forested area industrialized, especially in a highly valuable and sensitive habitat. It will take decades if not a century for nature to return it to its current state.

What seems most concerning to me is that clear beneficiaries of this project are NextEra and the towns in Massachusetts who will have lower electricity rates. What should be offensive to New Hampshire as a whole is that NextEra is selling to environmentally conscious consumers in Massachusetts who know doubt would be fighting to keep a project like this out of their own communities. Those municipalities don't where their "green energy" is coming from. And NextEra is not telling them.

A project like the one in Hinsdale would not be allowed in my town of Buckland, Massachusetts because pof our zoning bylaws that were voted on by the Town. My town is not engaging with NextEra's aggregate buying program. If it were, I would do my best to ensure that Buckland would not be exporting environmental damage to our neighboring state to the north in order to pay less for our light bills.

Respectfully submitted,

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Sources:  
News articles

1- [https://www.reformer.com/local-news/hinsdale-solar-project-would-be-largest-in-state/article\\_d948adce-30de-11ec-ad5c-e707b4d23e45.html](https://www.reformer.com/local-news/hinsdale-solar-project-would-be-largest-in-state/article_d948adce-30de-11ec-ad5c-e707b4d23e45.html)

2- [https://www.sentinelsource.com/news/local/hinsdale-residents-raise-environmental-questions-at-solar-array-info-session/article\\_9c35fea8-7777-5514-8888-aac3eb55d15c.html](https://www.sentinelsource.com/news/local/hinsdale-residents-raise-environmental-questions-at-solar-array-info-session/article_9c35fea8-7777-5514-8888-aac3eb55d15c.html)

Link to Nextera aggragate program

3- <https://www.nexteraenergyservices.com/aggregations/massachusetts/massachusetts-communitychoice-aggregation>

Links to maps

4- <https://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/maps/wap.html>

5 - <https://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/maps/wap/hinsdale8x11scoring.pdf>