

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Development

Bluestem Energy Solutions, LLC Madison County Solar Array: Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA

ACTION: Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Utilities Service (RUS) has made a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) with respect to a request for possible financing assistance to Bluestem Energy Solutions, LLC (Bluestem/Applicant) for the construction of the Madison County Solar Array in Madison County, Nebraska.

FURTHER INFORMATION: For further information, contact: RUS.EHPD.IRA@usda.gov. The EA and FONSI are available for public review at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/resources/environmental-studies/assessment/madison-county-solar-array>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The proposed Project consists of a solar electric generating facility that will provide 2.00 MW to the rate payers within Madison County. Alternatives considered by RUS and Bluestem include the No Action Alternative and one Action Alternative. The alternatives are discussed in the Madison County Solar Array EA. RUS has reviewed and approved the EA for the Action Alternative, which is the proposed Project.

The availability of the EA for public review was announced in the Norfolk Daily News on August 12, 2024, through August 14, 2024. An electronic copy of the EA was made available for a 14-day comment period.

Based on its EA, mitigation commitments made by Bluestem, and public comments received, RUS has concluded that the Project will have no significant effect to land use, important farmland, formally classified lands, floodplains, wetlands, water resources, coastal resources, biological resources, cultural resources and historic properties, aesthetics, air quality, socioeconomics and environmental justice, noise, transportation, human health and safety, and corridors.

The proposed Project will have no adverse effect on resources listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The Agency has also concluded that the proposed Project is not likely to affect federally listed threatened and endangered species

or designated critical habitat thereof. The proposed Project will not disproportionately affect minority and/or low- income populations.

No other potential significant impacts resulting from the proposed Project have been identified. Therefore, RUS has determined that this FONSI fulfills its obligations under the National Environmental Policy Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§ 4231–4347), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR §§ 1500-1508), and USDA Rural Development's Environmental Policies and Procedures (7 CFR Part 1970) for its action related to the Project.

RUS is satisfied that the environmental impacts of the proposed Project have been adequately addressed. RUS's potential federal action will not result in significant impacts to the quality of the human environment, and as such it will not prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for its action related to the proposed Project.

Dated: 08/27/2024