BIRDSEYE
RENEWABLE ENERGY

Statement in Support of Rezoning Application

Introduction:

Birdseye Renewable Energy proposes to develop a solar farm on approximately 35 acres of the approximately 60 acre parcel. This site is in no way related or associated with the Apple Inc. technology company or their solar development in the region. The name similarity was completely inadvertent. The site is located south of the terminus of Woodstone Drive. The property is currently zoned R-40, as are all adjacent properties. Existing development in the area is predominately residential and agricultural.

The planned development will involve mounting rows of Photovoltaic (PV) modules onto racks secured by post driven piles. This process minimizes grading and concrete used on site, preserves topsoil and maintains the property's value for future agricultural use when the solar farm is no longer operational. The PV array would be installed at a fixed angle facing south in order to maximize exposure to solar energy.

Solar farms generate electricity from sunlight and do not require the use of conventional carbon based fuels to operate. Once constructed, solar farms produce electricity for the duration of their utility contract with minimal operation and maintenance costs. Because solar electricity generation is not subject to the fluctuating price of conventional finite fuel sources, solar farms can stabilize the future cost of electricity for rate payers. Solar energy also provides a means of producing electricity without the environmental degradation and public risk associated with the extraction, transportation and combustion of traditional fossil fuels. The proposed solar farm would offer a relatively benign clean and renewable generator of electricity for the residents and businesses of Catawba County.

Rezoning Support Statement

The proposed rezoning is consistent with the current land use pattern in the area. The R-80 Conditional designation would preserve the large lot size required by the current R-40 designation. The proposal maintains the rural character of the area while providing a means of income generation for the landowners and the county. The site is largely shielded from public view by topography and existing vegetation. Additional public and adjacent property shielding will be provided through vegetative buffering along the perimeter of the project.

Solar farms are good neighbors. They are low to the ground, unlit, quiet and, once constructed, generate less traffic than a typical residence. The low-level hum that is generated at a solar farm comes from the electrical components that deliver solar power to the grid. The sound generated is generally on the scale of background noise in the daytime at the fence boundary and diminishes as one moves further away until it is inaudible at 50-150 feet from the project boundary. No noise at all is generated at night,

when there is no sunlight to power the modules. The only traffic generated by the solar farm will be occasional visits for equipment service and grounds maintenance. No structures are planned and no employees will be hosted on site. The site will be fenced by an eight-foot security fence and there are no associated health risks for the community. Solar modules are engineered to absorb rather than reflect sunlight. This fact, combined with the southern orientation of the panels (away from NC 16), the proposed site's relatively isolated location and vegetative buffering alleviates any concerns for reflectance as a nuisance or as a safety issue for neighbors or people traveling near the project.

Solar farms provide a long-term stream of tax revenue for the county with very little demand for county services. The proposed project has an estimated Catawba County tax Net Present Value of approximately $100,000-$120,000 over 20 years. The proposed project will demand no waste management, sewage, water, public lighting or school seats.

The proposed solar farm will comply with all environmental rules and regulations. During construction, the project will conform to all stormwater and erosion control measures. Grading on site will be minimized in order to preserve topsoil for future agricultural uses and to alleviate soil erosion and sedimentation. After construction is completed the site will be seeded with North Carolina Department of Environment Natural Resources (NCDENR) recommended grasses to stabilize the site and promote biodiversity of plant and animal species. The wetland area at the center of the site will be preserved in its current state and will not be negatively impacted by the proposed project.

The proposed solar farm plan was developed in accordance with the Catawba County Unified Development Ordinance No. 2013-16.