

**Statement of Justification in Support of Conditional Rezoning
Longneck Solar, LLC
Opposite 2725 Providence Mill Road, Maiden, NC 28650**

Project Narrative

This Conditional District Rezoning application is in support of a proposed Solar Farm, Longneck Solar, LLC to be located at the site opposite 2725 Providence Mill Road, Maiden, NC 28650. The site will have access from Providence Mill Road. The Solar Farm will contain rows of Photovoltaic (PV) cell panels mounted on posts set in the ground individually. These rows of panels are referred to as “solar arrays.” The solar arrays will be fixed in place facing south in order to receive the maximum amount of solar energy. This configuration contains no moving parts. Solar components will comply with the current edition of the National Electric Code, be UL listed (or equivalent), and designed with an anti-reflective coating.

The power generated from the solar farm will be sold to Duke Energy Carolinas for use by consumers to replace energy produced from a non-renewable source.

Statements of Justification

The use requested is listed among the conditional uses in the district for which the application is made.

The proposed solar farm is permitted as a conditional use in Section 44-403 and Section 44-328 of the Catawba County Unified Development Ordinance. The proposed solar farm will comply with all of the requirements in Section 44-633. – Solar farm (utility-scale solar application) of the Catawba County Unified Development Ordinance, as can be seen in the attached site plan. The proposed solar farm will meet all required setbacks: a 100-foot front setback measured from the edge of the rights-of-way and 50-foot side and rear setbacks. No structure will exceed a height of twenty-five feet (25').

The requested use is essential or desirable to the public convenience or welfare.

Solar energy is essential and desirable to the public convenience and welfare. Demand for electricity has increased in recent years, and our society is currently dependent upon conventional sources of power such as coal, gas, and nuclear energy. Conventional sources of electricity are expensive, finite resources that require significant

environmental disruption and public safety risk to maintain or extract. Solar energy is a clean, cheap, unlimited resource with little environmental impact.

Allowing the property to develop as a solar farm provides an opportunity for locally generated energy resources in Catawba County and creates income for the property owners and tax base for the County. Solar farms allow property owners to maintain large tracts of land that are easily redeveloped at the appropriate time in the future.

The use will not substantially injure the value of adjoining or abutting property, or is a public necessity.

The proposed solar farm will not substantially injure the value of adjoining or abutting property. Solar farms make good neighbors. They are quiet and have no moving parts. The only sound produced occurs during daylight hours with the quiet hum of electrical transformers and invertors delivering solar power to the grid. At night, when the sun is not available, there is no energy being created and no sound on the site. The solar panels are designed to absorb light, rather than reflect it, which mitigates glare concerns for adjoining properties.

Solar energy is a public necessity. Demand for electricity has drastically increased in recent years, and our society is currently dependent upon conventional sources of power such as coal, gas and nuclear energy. Conventional sources of electricity are expensive, finite resources that require significant environmental disruption and public safety risk to maintain or extract. Solar energy is a clean, cheap, unlimited resource with very minimal environmental impact. Allowing the property to develop as a solar farm will maintain the rural character of the area while providing a sustainable benefit to the community

The requested use will not impair the integrity or character of the surrounding or adjoining districts, nor be detrimental to the health, morals, or welfare.

The proposed solar farm will not impair the integrity or character of the surrounding or adjoining districts, nor be detrimental to the health, morals or welfare. Solar farms make good neighbors. They are quiet. The solar arrays have no moving parts. The only sound occurs during daylight hours with the quiet hum of electrical transformers, invertors, and the substation delivering solar power to the power grid. At night, when the sun is not available, there is no energy being created and no sound on the site. Solar farms generate fewer vehicles trips than the average home. Employees visit the site once a week or even less frequently. Solar panels are designed to absorb light, rather than reflect it, which mitigates glare concerns for adjoining properties.

The use will not materially endanger the public health or safety, if located according to the plan as submitted and approved.

The proposed solar farm will not endanger the public health or safety of Catawba County. The site will generate almost no traffic. Employees will visit the site once a week or even less frequently for routine maintenance of the arrays and the property.

The solar panels that comprise the solar arrays are made primarily of glass; they do not contain dangerous materials, nor do they emit dust, noxious fumes or liquids.

Adequate utilities, access to roads, drainage, sanitation and other necessary facilities are being provided.

The active area of the solar array public utility will be enclosed by an eight foot (8') high fence and gated for security purposes. Access codes to the gate will be provided to local police, fire and emergency service providers. Vehicular access to the site is adequate for the use proposed and for emergency services. The facility shall meet all requirements of the North Carolina State Building Code.

The location and character of the use will be in harmony with the area in which it is to be located

The proposed solar farm will be in harmony with the area in which it to be located. Surrounding properties are being utilized as Residential, Agricultural, and Vacant uses. The proposed solar farm is a low-impact use consistent with the land use pattern in the area today. Solar farms are quiet and they do not create noise, dust or odor as traditional farms can. Solar panels are lower in height than a typical home. After construction, they generate fewer trips than one single-family home. Allowing the property to develop as a Solar Farm will maintain the rural character of the area while providing a sustainable benefit to the community.

The requested use will be in conformity with the land development plan.

The proposed solar farm is consistent with the land use pattern that exists in the area today. Solar farms make good neighbors: they are quiet and they do not create the noise, dust, or odor as a traditional "farm" can. Solar panels are shorter in height than a typical home. The requested solar farm will be fully screened from adjoining properties with a double row of off-set evergreens absent mature vegetation, installed at a height of five feet achieving opaqueness and a minimum height of ten feet in five years, as prescribed by the Catawba County Utility Scale Solar Application. The proposed solar farm will be in conformity with Catawba County's Unified Development Ordinance.

Adequate utilities, access roads, drainage, sanitation, and other necessary facilities have been or are being provided.

Adequate utilities, access roads, drainage, sanitation and other necessary facilities are being provided. The active area of the solar farm will be enclosed by an eight foot (8') high fence and gated for security purposes. Access codes to the gate will be provided to local police, fire, and emergency service providers. Vehicular access to the site is adequate for the use proposed and for emergency services. There will be no buildings or employees on the property so there is no need for sewage disposal facilities, solid waste, or water on the site.

The proposed use will not adversely impact traffic circulation on or in the vicinity of the site.

The proposed solar farm will not adversely impact traffic circulation on or in the vicinity of the site. The site will generate almost no traffic--fewer trips than one single-family home after construction. The solar farm will not be staffed daily, and employees are expected to visit the property weekly or less frequently to maintain equipment and property. The site will have access from Providence Mill Road.

Description of all construction activities to be undertaken on the site

Construction of a solar farm consists primarily of installing solar panels on metal racking supported by posts that are individually driven into the ground. In addition, there will be several inverters and transformers installed on top of concrete pads and located internal to the solar farm. Power poles will be added to the point of interconnection to connect with the existing Duke Energy Carolina power lines.

Environmental impacts

Care is taken to design the site to minimize grading on the site by individually setting poles to support the solar cells. During construction, erosion control measures will be maintained in accordance with the County regulations and the site will comply with County storm water regulations.

For these reasons, we respectfully request approval of the proposed Conditional Use Rezoning for Longneck Solar, LLC to operate as use of Solar Farm.