

December 15, 2015

Susan Hudson, Clerk
Vermont Public Service Board
112 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-2701

Re: Sun CSA 62, LLC Docket Number NM-7108

Dear Ms. Hudson,

The Town of Moretown is exercising its right to intervene. Attached please find:

1. Comments
2. Certificate of Service

One hard copy is being hand-delivered to your office today.

Hard copies are being mailed to the Service List, as noted on the Certificate of Service.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Michelle Beard, Moretown Select Board
19 Kaiser Drive
Waterbury, VT 05676

mbeard@gmavt.net

**STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD**

Application of Sun CSA 43, LLC for a)
Certificate of Public Good Pursuant to)
30 V.S.A. '248 (b) 150 kW (AC)) Docket # NM-7108
Net Metered Solar Non-Photovoltaic)
Generation Facility located in)
Moretown, Vermont)

Town of Moretown Selectboard Comments Regarding Sun CSA 62, LLC

The Town of Moretown (hereinafter “the Town”) is exercising its right to intervene in the above matter and would like to offer the following comments on the proposed project.

1. Screening/Landscaping – The Town has reviewed the proposal and is concerned that there are no provisions in place for appropriate screening/landscaping. The only reference to this issue in the submitted proposal is contained in Attachment 6. SunCommon stated that it had contacted Moretown’s Zoning Administrator and was informed that the Town had not adopted any zoning bylaws requiring landscaping for ground-mounted solar systems. Lack of zoning bylaws notwithstanding, the Town feels that a project of this scope must contain a written plan developed in conjunction with the adjoining landowners to adequately screen the project. Nearby Route 100B has been recognized as an official Scenic Byway by the Federal Highway Administration. The Town’s landscape and historic settlement pattern are among its most important attributes. The Town wishes to protect the character of its rural landscape and feels that SunCommon should be responsible for suitable screening/landscaping.

A SunCommon representative indicated in an email dated December 8, 2015 to the selectboard that SunCommon, because they “want our solar arrays to look good” will “listen to local ideas for how the design is designed to best fit into our beloved landscapes” and would take ideas past the 30 day comment period. The Town is fearful that, absent any written requirements, SunCommon will not honor this nonbinding pledge. The Town feels that if SunCommon is truly intending to work with the community as far as landscaping, it would include a written landscaping plan in the proposed project.

The Town asks the Public Service Board to require SunCommon to provide a written plan detailing SunCommon’s obligations regarding appropriate screening/landscaping. The Town would further ask that this written plan take into account community input.

2. Decommissioning – Currently there is no state requirement that the owner of a solar array set up a plan to decommission the array at the end of its useful life. The Town has expressed to SunCommon its concern regarding the decommissioning of this particular project and has been told that SunCommon will “take care” of the array after its life span....”probably – if we are still around”. The Town feels that a project spanning 1.3 acres and containing 780 panels is significant enough to warrant a written plan to decommission once the array reaches the end of its useful life. The Town was not reassured by a SunCommon representative’s contention that the project was simply “posts in the ground” that are easily removed; but if this is the case, the development of a written plan to remove the array will not be unduly burdensome to SunCommon.

The Town asks the Public Service Board to require SunCommon to provide a written plan to decommission the solar array at the end of its useful life. In conjunction with the written plan, SunCommon should establish a Decommissioning Fund that will be used for the removal of the panels and support structures, the removal of any harmful by-products of the project and the return of the site to its pre-project condition. This fund should be available to the project even if SunCommon ceases to exist as an entity.

3. Timing – The Town received notice of this project on November 18, 2015. Neither the Moretown selectboard nor the Moretown planning commission meet weekly; therefore, the selectboard had only one scheduled meeting on December 7 in which to discuss this project and take public comment. As of the December 7th meeting, the planning commission had not yet had a scheduled meeting in which to discuss this project. The Town feels that 27 days is an inadequate amount of time to fully explore the complex issues regarding a project of this scope. One adjoining landowner has brought serious concerns to the Town regarding the historic significance of the site as well as wetland concerns. The Town is not able to research these concerns within the amount of time that remains in the public comment period. The planning commission has stated to the Town that it too would like additional time to review the proposed project to determine if they have further comments to bring to the Public Service Board.

The Town recognizes the importance of alternative energy projects in light of Vermont’s goal to have 90% of the energy used in Vermont to come from renewable sources by 2050. It is the sense of the Town that many community members are supportive of solar projects. That being said, the Town feels that it, in conjunction with the Public Service Board, has a responsibility to host town citizens to exercise due diligence in vetting all new energy projects. One crucial component is the time to make an informed decision.

SunCommon’s representative admitted to the Town that this particular project had been rushed through and that typically, SunCommon would spend more time in the community providing information and outreach.

The Town asks the Public Service Board to extend the public comment period for this particular project beyond the 30 day window to allow the selectboard and the planning commission additional time to determine if there are issues that should be brought to the attention of the Public Service Board.

4. Town Input – The Town recognizes that energy projects such as a community solar array fall under the jurisdiction of the Public Service Board. The Town would ask that the Public Service Board recognize that the Town should have a more vital role in these determinations.

The solar industry in Vermont has seen rapid expansion over the past decade. Allowing towns more of a voice in the process will not hamper alternative energy projects, it will improve them. Host towns bring to the table a vast body of knowledge. Early input regarding siting options and other local issues will promote well-thought out projects that will supply energy to Vermont for many years to come.

The Town asks the Public Service Board to review its policies regarding host town input and institute changes that allow towns to participate in a more meaningful manner.

Respectfully submitted this 15th day of December by

Michelle Beard
Moretown Select Board



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Docket Number NM-7108

Re: Sun CSA 62, LLC

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that hard copies of the foregoing filing were sent by U.S. Mail on December 15th, 2015 to the parties in this docket, listed below.

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