

# Excelsior Energy Project

[ExcelsiorEnergyCenter.com](http://ExcelsiorEnergyCenter.com)

700 Universe Boulevard  
Juno Beach, FL 33408



We hope this letter finds you safe and healthy.

We're writing to share an update on the Excelsior Energy Project, a 280-megawatt photovoltaic solar energy generating facility with 20 megawatts of energy storage. The proposed project will be located on private land in the Town of Byron and is expected to begin operating in 2022.

This project will deliver long-term revenue and economic development to the Town of Byron and Genesee County while supporting local farms and creating good jobs.

Since we announced the project in April 2019, we have enjoyed meeting with members of the Byron community and sharing information about the project. We have met with many residents – in their homes, on the phone, and sitting in the dining room of the Byron Hotel. We've also spent time with emergency personnel and community leaders as well as helped support local organizations, including sponsoring the Town of Byron's Bi-centennial Celebration fireworks this summer.

As you may recall, we held an open house in September of last year. We planned to hold another open house event this spring to share updates on the project, allow you to ask questions and hear directly from our subject-matter experts. We would still like to hold this open house at a later date, if conditions allow.

On the following pages, you will find information we intended to present at the open house, a list of frequently asked questions, and an updated project layout map. This map can also be found at: <https://www.excelsiorenergycenter.com/project-maps>.

We invite you to share any questions you may have in two different ways:

1. Sending an email to [info@excelsiorenergycenter.com](mailto:info@excelsiorenergycenter.com)
2. Calling (800) 674-8613

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Answers to questions we receive as a result of this correspondence will be posted on the project website (<https://www.excelsiorenergycenter.com/>) and the New York Department of Public Service 's webpage for this project (<https://on.ny.gov/3iQRqBm>).

We continue to coordinate and consult with the community and a variety of New York State and local authorities as part of the permitting and approval process for Excelsior. We respectfully request that you provide feedback by August 17, 2020.

This project's namesake, "Excelsior," is the state motto of New York. It means "Ever Upward." This project promises to deliver significant economic benefits to the community. It will generate millions of dollars of incremental tax revenue shared between the town, county, and school over the life of the project, with the potential to reduce the tax burden on all residents of Byron. In addition, Excelsior Solar will make significant annual payments to the Town of Byron to fund local initiatives and projects that will improve quality of life for all residents. The project will create 200-250 jobs during construction, three to four full-time positions, and opportunities for landscaping and snow plowing throughout the life of the project. If desired, a portion of the project could be set aside to serve as a Community Solar project for local residents and businesses. And finally, the project will help support income diversification for farms in Byron, ensuring that they have the opportunity to thrive long into the future.

None of these things would happen without your support for this project. Thank you for helping us make Excelsior the best example of what a solar project can be.

Gratefully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keddy Chandran".

Keddy Chandran  
Director, Northeast Renewable Development  
NextEra Energy Resources

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## Fact Sheet

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

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Proposed by a subsidiary of NextEra Energy Resources, LLC, Excelsior Energy Project is a 280-megawatt solar project with 20 megawatts/four hours of energy storage capability located in the town of Byron, Genesee County, New York.

The project will interconnect with the existing electrical transmission system and its expected commercial operation date is in 2022.

### Economic Benefits

- Excelsior Energy Project is expected to deliver new jobs, taxes and economic development to Genesee County.
- The project will create 200-250 jobs during construction, three to four full-time positions, and opportunities for landscaping and snow plowing throughout the life of the project.
- It will support the local economy through the purchase of regional goods and services.
- It will deliver safe and clean renewable energy.

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#### A Leader in Clean Energy

The project's sponsor, NextEra Energy Resources, is the world's largest generator of renewable energy from the wind and the sun with more than 21,000 megawatts of generating capacity primarily in 37 states and Canada as of year-end 2019. NextEra Energy was named to Fortune's 2019 list of the "World's Most Admired Companies" and was also recognized among the top 25 companies worldwide, across all industries, for innovation and social responsibility.

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## Fact Sheet

### BENEFITS OF SOLAR ENERGY

The Excelsior Energy Project will position Genesee County as a leader in renewable energy and help New York meet its renewable energy goals.

#### Environmental Compatibility

Solar energy creates no greenhouse gases or other air pollutants.

- Uses no water resource to generate electricity.
- Creates no waste byproducts when generating electricity.
- Does not create any hazardous material clean-up concerns at the end of a project's productive life.

#### Local and State Leadership

- The Excelsior Energy Project will help New York meet its renewable energy goals while creating lasting benefits for Genesee County.
- New York state has a goal to produce 70 percent of its total power from renewable sources by 2030, and projects like this will help meet that need.
- Generation serving electrical demand is targeted to be zero emissions by 2040.
- This new source of clean, renewable power produces no air or water pollution and is in line with the state's Climate Change and Community Protection Act, the Clean Energy Standard and the Reforming the Energy Vision (REV) initiative, which are fostering new opportunities for renewable power that will help New York transform its energy generation system.

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### STUDIES

In support of the permitting process, the Excelsior Energy Project must conduct numerous detailed studies to ensure the project is appropriately and thoughtfully designed. In consultation with various agencies and stakeholders, the following studies have been, or will be, conducted by subject-matter experts. These studies must adhere to rigorous guidelines and are subject to regulatory oversight by New York state.

#### Studies Include

- Wetlands and Streams
- Threatened and Endangered Species
- Habitat Characterization
- Avian Use
- Archaeological Resources
- Historic Architecture
- Sound
- Visual
- Socioeconomic
- Site Decommissioning and Restoration
- Geotechnical
- Glare

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## Fact Sheet

### CONSTRUCTION PROCESS

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Should the Excelsior Energy Project receive necessary approvals, the project will employ best-in-class construction techniques and practices.

#### Solar Arrays and Electrical Interconnection

- Solar panels are placed on racks that are driven directly into the ground.
- Groups of racks and solar panels are connected through a series of electric cables that run to collection boxes and inverters.
- Inverters will be installed to convert the power from direct current to alternating current.
- A project substation will be constructed to increase the voltage for connection to the power grid.

#### Site Access

- The project plans to work with the state, county and town to minimize the impact on roads and local traffic.
- Public roads will be used to transport equipment to the construction site.
- Gravel roads will be constructed for access within the site.
- Equipment will be delivered by truck and trailer as needed throughout the construction phase and stored at temporary lay-down yards within the site.

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### About the Excelsior Energy Project

#### **Q: What is the Excelsior Energy Project?**

**A:** Located on private land in the town of Byron in Genesee County, N.Y., the Excelsior Energy Project is a proposed 280-megawatt photovoltaic solar energy generating facility including a 20 megawatt, four-hour battery energy storage system.

The Excelsior Energy Project is proposed by a subsidiary of NextEra Energy Resources, Inc., the world's largest generator of renewable energy from the wind and sun.

#### **Q: How much land will the project utilize?**

**A:** The fenced area will be approximately 1,650 acres. Approximately 50 percent of land inside the fence will have panels on it.

#### **Q: When will this project begin generating power?**

**A:** The Excelsior Energy Project is expected to begin commercial operation in late 2022 and is designed to operate for at least 30 years.

#### **Q: How much energy will the Excelsior Energy Project generate?**

**A:** The Excelsior Energy Project will have the capacity to generate 280 megawatts of solar energy and is expected to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by an average of 300,000 tons every year. This is the equivalent of taking more than 50,000 cars off the road.

Furthermore, the 280-megawatt solar facility will produce electricity without creating air or water pollution and without the use of water for generation.

#### **Q: How will viewshed questions be addressed?**

**A:** The project will be designed to meet or exceed local setback requirements. Where appropriate, the project will include vegetation to form a visual screen consisting of native plants, different species and various heights.

Further information about the visual impacts will be presented in the project's application.

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## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What specific benefits will the project bring?**

**A: Additional Revenue to Community**

The Excelsior Energy Project will bring numerous benefits through a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreement, which will provide millions in revenue to the taxpayers of Genesee County, town of Byron and the Byron Bergen School District to invest in infrastructure, additional services, and resources for residents.

### Jobs

The Excelsior Energy Project's goal is to hire as many workers as possible from the local area. With a construction labor budget of approximately \$40MM, the project will invest a significant amount of money in construction labor, creating employment opportunities for those in the construction trades, including equipment operators, truck drivers, laborers, and electricians.

Further, the project is expected to create three to four full-time positions during the project's life.

### Support to Local Businesses

There will be opportunities for local businesses to supply materials to support construction of the project. Additionally, the service industry (e.g., hotels, restaurants and entertainment venues) will benefit from an increase in worker activity throughout the construction period.

### Support to Local Farmers

Through land agreements, the Excelsior Energy Project will support the agricultural economy by infusing revenue into local farms and diversifying income.

**Q: Will the Excelsior Energy Project provide other direct economic benefits to the town of Byron?**

**A:** The project is currently negotiating a Payment-in-Lieu-of-Tax (PILOT) Agreement and Host Community Agreement with the town of Byron.

PILOT agreement funding will go toward the town's tax base, which will significantly reduce the remaining tax burden on individual property owners without impacting municipal services.

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## Frequently Asked Questions

The Host Community Agreement will also contribute new funds to the town, allowing it to spend on special programs and projects that are beneficial to Byron's residents. Some ideas from the community include:

- Further property tax relief
- Fire training
- Funding for local institutions including the fire department, museum and cemetery maintenance
- Water service completion for town
- Establishment of a town improvement fund
- Expanded youth programs
- Splash pad for town park
- Community-wide solar/energy benefit program
- Funds for a town grant writer
- Linear park pavement
- An electronic public information board
- Funding for a farmland protection plan

### **Q: Why the town of Byron?**

**A:** The town of Byron possesses the critical elements required for an efficient solar and energy storage project, including available land from willing landowners, strong solar resource, existing road infrastructure, ready access to transmission infrastructure, and available land in an area well suited environmentally to host such a project.

### **Q: How is the project being permitted?**

**A:** The permitting of the Excelsior Energy Project will be conducted in accordance with New York state's Article 10 law. This thorough process requires local input and mandates rigorous study of the project. Through Article 10, Excelsior will continue to seek input from community stakeholders and will work to minimize potential impacts to the maximum extent practicable. Information about the Article 10 process can be found at [www.dps.ny.gov/SitingBoard/](http://www.dps.ny.gov/SitingBoard/).

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### Q: What is the town of Byron's role in the Article 10 process?

**A:** Byron is automatically a party in the review process and is entitled to apply for intervenor funding to support its legal and technical efforts in the hearings. It has all the rights parties have in the Article 10 review process, including the right to present expert testimony, conduct cross examination, and submit legal briefs. Furthermore, local members of the community are also eligible to serve on the Siting Board.

### Q: How can members of the public become involved?

**A:** Representatives from the Excelsior Energy Project have attended community events and talked to neighbors to obtain local feedback. As a result, the proposed project design incorporates many comments from the community.

At NextEra Energy Resources, we believe in building strong partnerships and supporting the communities we serve. At every stage of developing a solar energy project, from siting to construction to operations, we strive to:

- Establish a cooperative relationship with the community
- Listen to our neighbors
- Share information
- Ensure that our proposal fits the interests and priorities of the community

Members of the stakeholder list receive important project materials and notice of project milestones. Members of the public are invited to join the project stakeholder list by:

- Calling (800) 674-8613
- Mailing a letter to:

**Keddy Chandran**  
**Excelsior Energy Project**  
c/o Michelle K. Piasecki  
Harris Beach PLLC  
677 Broadway, Suite 1101  
Albany, NY 12207

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## Frequently Asked Questions

- Sending an [email to info@excelsiorenergycenter.com](mailto:info@excelsiorenergycenter.com)
- Or, visiting [www.excelsiorenergycenter.com/summary-of-intervenor-funding-process](http://www.excelsiorenergycenter.com/summary-of-intervenor-funding-process)

Additionally, guidance about intervenor funds in the Article 10 process is available on the project website at [www.excelsiorenergycenter.com/article-10-public-involvement-program-tracking-report](http://www.excelsiorenergycenter.com/article-10-public-involvement-program-tracking-report).

**Q: What happens to the project once it has reached the end of its useful life?**

**A:** The anticipated life of this project is 30 years. At the end of that period the project may continue operating, be repowered or be removed through a process called decommissioning. If the solar facility is decommissioned the land would be able to return to farmland.

As part of the project's permitting and approval process, the Excelsior Energy Project is required to fully fund decommissioning efforts up front through a bond or other financial security. These funds are set aside to remove the project and restore the land to substantially its previous state. Furthermore, the project plans to abide by NYS Department Ag and Markets guidelines for solar installation requiring the land's potential to return to agricultural use after decommissioning.

**Q: Will the project impact hunting?**

**A:** Outside the facility area, it is up to individual landowners to let people hunt.

**Q: Will the project have an impact on groundwater?**

**A:** The Excelsior Energy Project will use safe solar panel technology that does not impact groundwater.

During operations, there will be no water withdrawal or discharge involved with operation of the project. However, solar projects require water during construction, primarily for dust control, soil compaction, concrete hydration and revegetation, if necessary. For these uses, the water is expected to be trucked in by an off-site supplier or accessed from a participating landowner's existing well, if the landowner is agreeable.

Additionally, the project will improve current land management practices, thereby reducing potential impacts to groundwater.

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### Q: How will the completed project maintain vegetation?

**A:** Mowing will be the primary method of vegetation maintenance proposed at the Excelsior Energy Project. In select instances, such as an increase in weed population in a specific area, it may be necessary to utilize herbicides. If herbicides are used as part of the project, they will be selected in accordance with applicable New York state regulations and applied by a state-certified applicator. Broadcast or aerial spraying will not be used.

Use of fertilizers or pesticides is not expected.

### Q: How is the project working with local emergency management officials?

**A:** With the input of local first responders, the Excelsior Energy Project will implement an emergency response plan (ERP). In the unlikely event of an emergency, this plan will outline the contingencies that would constitute a safety or security emergency, the appropriate response measures to be taken as a result of the emergency, any evacuation control measures that may be necessary, and the means by which the community will be notified of the emergency and any procedures that shall be followed. In addition, training will be provided to the appropriate emergency response agencies, including the local fire and police departments.

NextEra Energy Resources has already hosted an information session with local first responders, and additional meetings are expected.

## About Solar Energy

### Q: Are the materials used in solar panels safe? What happens if they break?

**A:** Solar panels are made of solid materials and do not pose a hazard to the general public, underlying soil or groundwater. In fact, people have been safely living and working around solar panels for decades. Solar energy emits no pollution and there is no impact of solar on human health.

During construction or operation, if panels are damaged, trained facility personnel will safely collect, recycle and/or properly dispose of them in a manner that meets or exceeds regulatory requirements.

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## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What odors are associated with large solar?**

**A:** Solar panels do not emit odors.

**Q: Do solar energy projects make noise?**

**A:** Solar projects operate quietly. During the short construction period, noise at the project area would be typical of construction sites.

As part of the Article 10 process, the project has experts take detailed sound measurements of the project site in order to design the project to meet or exceed all applicable regulations.

**Q: Would the panels cause drainage issues?**

**A:** Existing drain tiles will be identified and located before construction as much as is reasonably possible based primarily on consultation with the landowner. During and after construction operations, any existing drain tiles within the area of disturbance will be checked for damage, and damaged drain tiles will be repaired or replaced by qualified drain-tile specialists as specified in landowner lease agreements. The Applicant will coordinate with the landowner to continue to monitor drain tiles post-construction to ensure repairs are properly functioning.

The NYSDEC requires coverage under the NYSDEC State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Construction Activity (GP-0-20-001). Prior to construction, the Applicant will be required to prepare a Final Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), which will describe in specific terms the erosion and sediment control practices that will be implemented during construction activities, and the stormwater management practices that will be used to reduce the pollutants in stormwater discharges after project construction has been completed. This SWPPP will be prepared as part of the requirements for coverage under GP-0-20-001. The Preliminary SWPPP provides information on stormwater management practices, including erosion and sediment control (vegetative and structural measures, temporary and permanent measures), construction phasing and disturbance limits, waste management and spill prevention, and site inspection and maintenance. Pre- and post-development hydrology, in addition to evaluation of runoff and drainage patterns, will be analyzed as part of stormwater design in accordance with final project layout, and will be included in the Final SWPPP.

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q: Can the equipment be damaged by weather?**

**A:** The support systems for the solar arrays are designed to withstand the typical wind loading and snow loading present in this area. PV panel manufacturers have tested and rated their equipment to withstand the impact of hailstones up to a certain size. Any panels that are damaged by hail or other debris can be individually replaced without taking the entire project out of service.

In the case of severe weather or natural disaster, if panels are damaged, trained facility personnel will safely collect, recycle where feasible and/or properly dispose of them.

### **Q: During construction or operations, how are community concerns reported and managed?**

**A:** A Complaint Resolution Plan will be developed for this project to resolve issues and complaints. A phone number and email address will be posted.

Either the Siting Board or the Public Service Commission, depending upon when a potential issue may arise, is responsible for enforcing the conditions issued in any Article 10 certificate.

## About Energy Storage (Excelsior)

### **Q: Will this project have an energy storage system?**

**A:** The Excelsior Energy Project is proposed to have a generating capacity of approximately 280 MW of power including 20 megawatts of energy storage.

### **Q: How does an energy storage system work with solar?**

**A:** The energy storage system would be used to increase the efficiency of the solar facility, allowing the facility to capture more energy from the sun and deliver it to the grid in the evening.

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## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: How will the energy storage system be incorporated into the project layout?**

**A:** The energy storage systems will be co-located at approximately 11 inverter locations within the solar array. Inverter locations can be seen on the project layout.

**Q: Do energy storage system containers have fire detection systems?**

**A:** NextEra Energy Resources uses sophisticated fire detection systems in all its battery containers, which minimizes the risk of a fire. Each storage facility is equipped with its own air conditioning or cooling system to ensure it operates within a prescribed temperature range. NextEra Energy Resources storage facilities also employ software controls to shut down battery cells in the event excess heat is detected. An off-site, 24-hour control room with trained technicians also constantly monitors each site and can remotely shut down the facility, if needed, and can dispatch on-site maintenance.

**Q: Will storage units be located near residences?**

**A:** No energy storage unit will be proposed any closer than 582.98 ft. to a residence.

**Q: Will first responders be trained on how to deal with energy storage systems?**


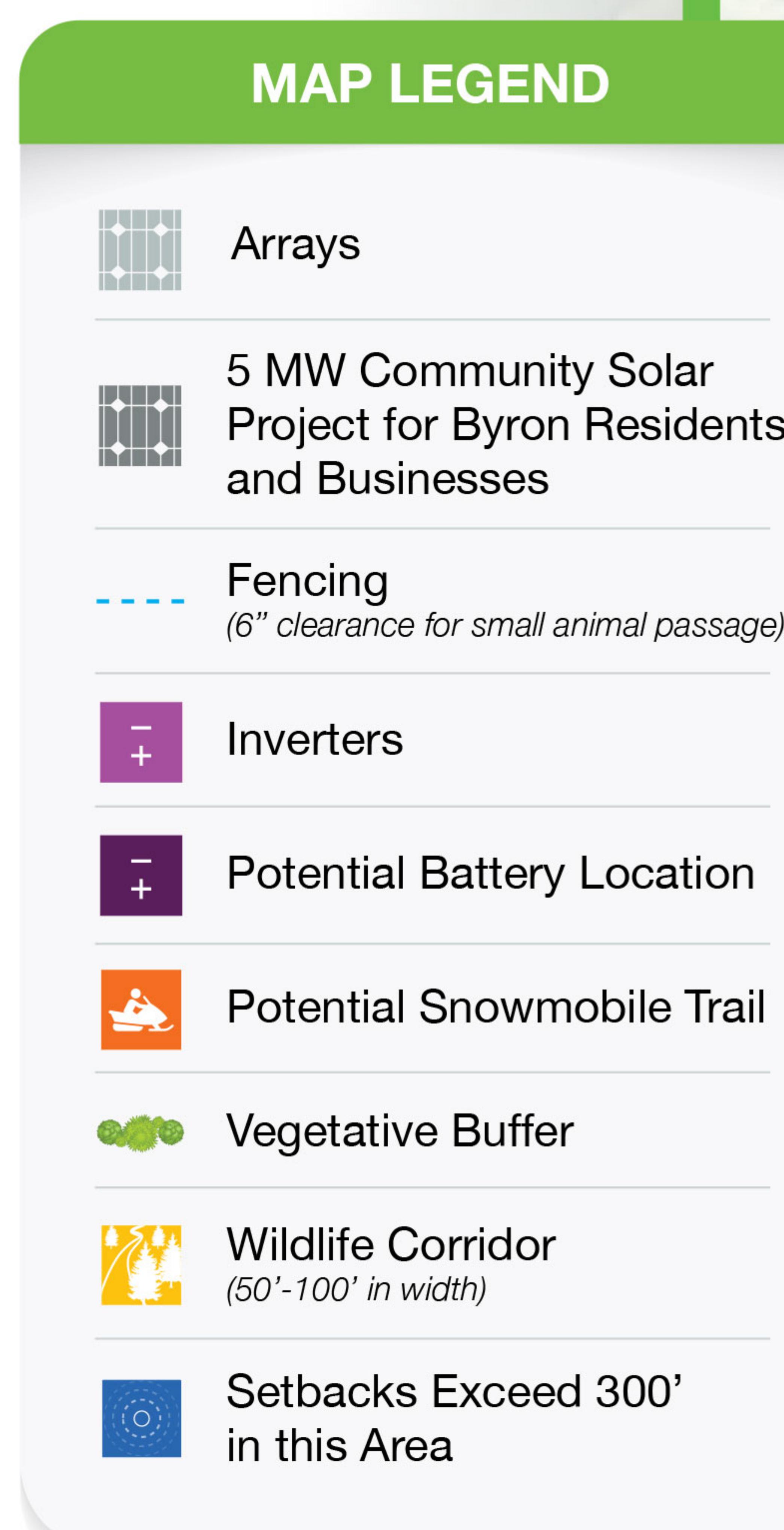
**A:** Yes, NextEra Energy Resources will conduct such training prior to the commencement of commercial operation of the project. NextEra Energy Resources conducts regular meetings and training sessions at its sites with local first responders to ensure they're prepared to respond to an incident at any of the company's facilities.

# Excelsior Solar Project Conceptual Proposed Layout

Located in the Town of Byron in Genesee County, N.Y., the Excelsior Solar Project is a proposed 280-megawatt photovoltaic solar energy generating facility coupled with 20 megawatts/4 hours of energy storage.

The Project will create new jobs, generate long term revenue, and deliver economic development to Genesee County and the Town of Byron.

The Excelsior Solar Project will be located at least 300-feet from all residential structures, 200-feet from property lines and roads, and in some areas expands to 500-feet from residences or leaves fields entirely empty to accommodate local concerns. The Project will also feature vegetative buffers consisting of native trees, shrubs, grasses, and pollinators to help screen the view of the panels and potentially provide a habitat for local wildlife over time.



Re: Case 19-F-0299  
Excelsior Energy Center, LLC  
Excelsior Energy Center 280-Megawatt Solar Photovoltaic Generation Project with Energy Storage  
Town of Byron, Genesee County, New York

August 3, 2020

Dear Secretary Phillips,

This letter serves to supplement the Public Involvement Program (PIP) Plan filed in the above-captioned proceeding on April 24, 2019. The PIP provided, *inter alia*, that two open house events, one during the day and one in the evening, on the same day, would be held before the Article 10 Application was filed. Considering the restrictions on public gatherings ordered by the Governor to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, it is not currently possible to hold these open houses prior to the filing of the Article 10 Application as the Applicant had intended to do so. Accordingly, after discussing the matter with the Department of Public Service, the Applicant will postpone holding the open house events, and, accordingly, they will be rescheduled to a date when the applicable public health restrictions are lifted and exposure risks have sufficiently abated.

To solicit further input from the public at this time, the Applicant will send updated project information materials, by US mail and/or email, depending on contact information availability and the Stakeholders' previously indicated preference, to the Project Stakeholder List. The materials will contain a copy of this letter together with an updated fact sheet and Project map. The public will be invited to submit comments within a 14-day period, via either the Project's toll -free number or the Project's email address. After the conclusion of the comment period, the Applicant will post on the Project's website and on the DPS DMM website for the Project, the relevant comments received and the Applicant's responses to them. Commenters will not be identified in this document. The materials will inform the public that they may view the comments and responses on these two websites. Once the public repositories are reopened, the response document will also be sent to those facilities.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Excelsior Energy Center, LLC



William J. Boer, PP, AICP  
Project Manager Environmental Services