

James Bellamy
Planning Officer
Department of Planning and Environment
C/o Major Projects Portal

Re: Draft Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements – Texas Solar Farm – SSD-68928973

Dear Mr Bellamy

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the draft SEARs for the above proposal.

NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Agriculture collaborates with our stakeholders to protect and enhance the productive and sustainable use and resilience of agricultural resources and the environment.

The draft SEARs are generally sufficient for covering the potential impacts of the proposal on agricultural land and resources. The land has a Land and Soil Capability of Class 5 throughout and is managed for cattle grazing. The proposal is in a productive agricultural area supporting similar enterprises. The site was evidently selected due to in situ transmission lines.

The following comments are however made for consideration in the Environmental Impact Statement:

- A Land Use Conflict Risk Assessment (LUCRA) should be undertaken at a level of detail commensurate with the potential for land use conflict between the proposed use and surrounding agriculture. This should be based upon the Land Use Conflict Risk Assessment (LUCRA) Guide and involve direct consultation with neighbouring landowners/agricultural operators where possible. It should include consideration of any sensitive agricultural uses such as breeding or cropping, as well as any potential biosecurity and weed management risk.
- Implementation of agrisolar (i.e. concurrent grazing of the site) should prioritise the long-term soil health of the site by implementing a minimum 70% groundcover target. Further detail on the establishment and operation of sheep grazing enterprises should be provided, noting the property is used for cattle grazing.
- A Rehabilitation/Decommissioning Management Plan should be developed with the specific objective of returning the site to its previous agricultural productivity potential, including

removing of underground infrastructure to a depth of 500mm to allow the return to agricultural use.

- The social impact assessment should consider potential impacts to local agricultural enterprises stemming from overlap with potential seasonal agricultural labour requirements drawing from the same labour market and accommodation demand, albeit some located in Queensland.

Should you require clarification on any of the information contained in this response, please do not hesitate to contact me by email at landuse.ag@dpi.nsw.gov.au.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Milo Kelly', with a stylized flourish underneath.

Milo Kelly
Agricultural Land Use Planning Officer
Soils and Water | Agricultural Land Use Planning
New England and North West Region

10 April 2024