Public Involvement

Per Section 8-111.i of the Evangeline Parish Utility Scale Solar Facility Standards Ordinance and AES best practices, an open house was conducted in Ville Platte, Evangeline Parish to present the Project to the public. At the open house, the AES gave a presentation on the Project and answered questions for the public. Additionally, boards with Project maps and information were also available for viewing and discussion at the meeting.

A summary of the public comments along with the AES' next steps to mitigate concerns about the Project is included below.

Project Public Comments	
Public Comment	**Project's Next Steps**
Visual Affects: Will I be able to see solar panels from my house?	Section 8-110.a requires Project solar panels, inverters, and substations must be at least 100 feet from occupied buildings (i.e., homes). The Project meets this requirement. In all cases, the Project exceeds this minimum setback. On average, Project equipment is over 300 feet from all homes adjacent to the Project. Section 8-110.g requires the Project to plant landscaping screening where occupied buildings are within 200 feet of Project equipment. The Project meets this requirement. AES is continuing conversations from the open house and will work with individual landowners directly impacted by the Project to mitigate their concerns on visual affects wherever possible.

Project Public Comments	
Public Comment	**Project's Next Steps**
Visual Affects: Will I be able to see solar panels from my adjacent property?	Section 8-110.a requires Project solar panels, inverters, and substations must be at least 25 feet from adjacent property boundaries. The design meets this requirement and, in all cases, exceeds this minimum setback. On average, Project equipment is over 150 feet from adjacent property boundaries on the Project. AES is continuing conversations from the open house and will work with individual landowners directly impacted by the Project to mitigate their concerns on visual affects wherever possible.
Visual Affects: Will I be able to see the panels while driving around my community?	Section 8-110.a requires Project solar panels, inverters, and substations must be at least 50 feet from the edge of public road and highway rights-of-way. The Project meets this requirement, and the Project exceeds this setback requirement in most areas.

Project Public Comments	
Public Comment	**Project's Next Steps**
Property Value: My property is adjacent to the Project, and I'm concerned my home will decrease in value.	*Solar Information for Louisiana Residents* by Dr. Terrance L. Chambers outlines the many studies conducted on the effects of solar farm development adjacent to residential and agricultural land. There are no negative effects on property values from the development of solar farms[1]. The criteria that typically correlates with downward adjustments on property values are things like noise, odor, and traffic. As the operation of solar farms does not cause noise, odor, or sustained traffic, solar farms are compatible uses for rural/residential transition areas and will not affect the community character.
Health Impacts: How do these solar panels affect the health of people, animals, and plants (agriculture) around them?	The safety of solar panels and the solar farms has been extensively studied. The Project generally does not risk the health of people, animals, or the surrounding vegetation. *Solar Information for Louisiana Residents*[1] by Dr. Terrance L. Chambers outlines the various health and safety impacts of solar farms (hazardous materials, EMFs, etc.) and confirms that they do not present a risk to the public.

[1] T. Chambers, Ph.D., P.E. (2024) *Solar Information for Louisiana Residents* [White Paper] Energy Efficiency and Sustainability Energy Center

Project Public Comments	
Public Comment	**Project's Next Steps**
Environmental Impacts: Will this project create a 'Heat Island Effect'?	'Heat Island Effect' refers to a consistent and significant increase in temperature, which lasts both day and night. While temperatures can increase in, and immediately around the solar panels during the day, this heat dissipates quickly with distance away from the solar field. Additionally, vegetation beneath and around the solar farm works to regulate the ambient air temperature around the solar panels, and the panels cool completely overnight. Solar farms do not cause sustained Heat Island Effects.
Community: What benefit does this project have for my community (Evangeline Parish)?	AES has supported training programs and is developing a relationship with SLCC that aims to benefit the local communities (see Section 2.4 for further details). Directly, the Project brings tax revenue (see Section 3.4 for further details) to the Parish at no additional cost on Parish facilities. AES sees this Project as the start of a long-term relationship with Evangeline Parish stakeholders to contribute to the needs of the Parish and build our positive impact in Louisiana.

Project Public Comments	
Public Comment	**Project's Next Steps**
Agricultural Land: Our community is historically agricultural based. I'm concerned about developing our land into something that's not agricultural.	Approximately 8 million acres are actively farmland within Louisiana. If all the currently proposed solar projects within Louisiana were developed, less than 1 percent of Louisiana's farmland would be converted.[2] Per the 2017 Census of Agriculture, Evangeline Parish has over 158,000 acres of active farmland. The proposed Project would account for less than 1% conversion of active farmland within the Parish. Additionally, the Project has a lifespan of 35 years and after the completion of decommissioning, the land can be actively farmed again.
Traffic: How will the Project affect traffic in my community?	Section 8-111.e requires a Preliminary Traffic Plan (PTP) to be included in the application. The PTP is included as Attachment 8 and detailed in Section 3.6 of the Application. These items detail the anticipated traffic for construction, operation, and decommissioning. Overall, there will be a temporary increase in traffic during the 18-24 months of construction. After construction, the Project will be a quiet neighbor to the community.

[2] T. Chambers, Ph.D., P.E. (2024) *Solar Information for Louisiana Residents* [White Paper] Energy Efficiency and Sustainability Energy Center

Project Public Comments	
Public Comment	**Project's Next Steps**
Traffic: How will the Project traffic affect the roads in my local community?	As detailed in the PTP, Project contractors will designate haul routes, as needed, for heavy vehicle traffic and large trucks and equipment. Road inspection and repair protocol are detailed in the PTP and will be completed with Evangeline Parish on these haul routes. If a haul route designation is needed on state roads, a similar inspection and repair plan will be created with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LaDOTD).
Supply Chain: Will the solar panels be made in the USA?	A consistent and diverse supply chain is important to ensure long-term success in the energy industry; A focus on nearshoring is important as domestic content rules and regulations continue to be clarified. AES prefers to use solar panels made in the USA whenever possible. Through our supply chain process, we identify and prioritize equipment manufacturers that align with our environmental, safety and human rights commitments. Some of these commitments include buying equipment from manufacturers whose supply chains and suppliers comply with a national recycling program
Taxes: My property is adjacent to the Project. What impacts will the Project have on my taxes?	The Project will not negatively affect the property taxes of the adjacent properties.