Meeting Summary Report

City of Greater Sudbury	
Thursday, June 11, 2015	**6:00 pm – 8:00 pm**
Meeting Location	Valley East Library & Citizens Service Centre 4100 Elmview Drive Hanmer, ON P3P 1J7
Attendees	97 community members, including: • Two municipal councillors • Six Registered Proponent project team members • Two media *All personal information removed in accordance with the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, 2000.*
Overview of the Meeting	
	The meeting was open format. Community members were welcome to come at any time, view the publicly displayed material and ask questions.
Comments and Concerns	
Natural habitats & animal migration patterns	**Community Member #1:** • Concerned that threatened species such as the eastern whip-poor-will (bird) and Blanding's turtles are present in the area. **Proponent's Response** Solar development is non-invasive – which includes being respectful of all identified natural habitats and migration patterns. Through the Government of Ontario's Renewable Energy Approvals (REA) process, species that may be at risk or displaced because of any solar development are identified. Action is taken to either support the thriving development of these animals, or plans are changed to ensure their survival. In one of our operating projects in Ontario, the eastern loggerhead shrike, a small migratory bird, was identified and immediately protected. A population was located in proximity of the site to ensure the survival of the species. Safety fencing and special animal-friendly fencing were used to build a secure area for the birds and to allow animals to pass underneath, so as to not restrict their natural movement. We are committed to protecting the environment, as well as providing a clean energy powered future for all.

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	For more information on the REA process, please visit: https://www.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/renewable-energy-approvals
Construction/traffic/damage of roadways during construction	**Community Member #2:** • Concerned about additional traffic on the street for three to four years, and how the dust and noise will affect residents. • Concerned that the project will take three to five years to build. **Proponent's Response** The construction phase of a solar energy project is a relatively brief period compared to the total lifespan of the project. During this construction phase, the use of local roadways may add some additional traffic to the community. Solar projects of a large scale (over 10 MW) tend to take approximately nine to 12 months to construct, whereas other fossil fuel generating facilities can take years to complete. All construction is approved by the Ontario Government's Renewable Energy Approval (REA) process and the local municipality prior to work commencing. It is understandable that some community members may express concern regarding the noise related to the construction of a renewable energy facility. Once grading and levelling of the site is complete, other than the creation of piles (holes in the ground for support racking) with a boring machine, construction is relatively simple and as such, the sound impact is minimal. The majority of installation is conducted by hand using a screwdriver or drill. Once the solar project is built, the operation of the park requires only security and maintenance to visit the site as necessary. Noise studies are part the Ontario Government's Renewable Energy Approval (REA) process. Sound from the proposed project from offsite, and any other potential projects nearby, may not exceed 40 decibels, or the equivalent of rustling leaves.
Well water & ground water contamination	**Community Member #1:** • Asked: "Will the construction affect the water?" **Proponent's Response** Community interest and public scrutiny are common in relation to any land development and the potential threat to wells, ground and source water. To address these inquiries, the Government of Ontario requires all renewable energy projects to complete a Renewable Energy Approvals (REA) process.

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	Through the REA process, proposals competing under the Independent Electricity System Operator's (IESO) Large Renewable Procurement (LRP) program must, upon awarding of a contract, meet extremely rigorous criteria relating to the environment. This applies to all aspects of the environment, from water sources to flora and fauna. Before construction of a project can even begin, all aspects of the Ontario REA process must be met, or the project will not be built. For more information regarding the REA process please visit: https://www.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/renewable-energy-approvals
Land & property value	**Community Member #2:** • Concerned about property values decreasing. **Proponent's Response** It is understandable that some community members may express concern about the possibility of a decrease in the value of their property, due to its proximity to a solar site. There is no available evidence (via systematic reviews of impact on property values) that links the location of a fully operational solar facility with impacts on property value after the construction phase. Landowners who have lease agreements are compensated, and the increase in revenue per acre for the lessor could potentially result in an increase in property value. With regards to a property being within visual distance of the solar facility, and related concerns about possible impacts on property values, the solar development will be designed to minimize any potential visual effects on nearby landowners, and thus any potential impact to property values.
Public meeting	**Community Member #3:** • Community member did not like the open house style format as s/he was expecting a presentation. • Would have benefited from a sit-down meeting. • Only three representatives were available. • Only heard about the public meeting by word-of-mouth. **Proponent's Response** The open house format of the meeting was structured to accommodate everyone's schedule, allowing those with work, family or other commitments to arrive any time between 6:00 pm and 8:00 pm, and not feel they missed a presentation or a portion of the meeting.

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	At the meeting community members talked amongst themselves, and in small groups with SkyPower representatives, allowing them to share one another's interests and concerns. There were six SkyPower representatives present to answer questions. The open house structure maximizes the amount of time community members can spend with registered proponent project team members, allowing for more questions to be answered. Meeting notifications were published in the Northern Life newspaper on May 12 and May 19, 2015. In addition, as per the requirements of the LRP I RFP, adjacent landowners within 120 metres of the proposed project site and the connection line were notified by mail.
Visual impact	**Community Member #4:** • Does not want to see the solar park next to his/her house. **<u>Proponent's Response</u>** Visual impact is one of the most frequent questions from community members with regard to solar park development. Visual abatement is a key component of solar park development. While the park is being constructed, typically a period of approximately nine to 12 months, the solar park can be quite visible as the construction process calls for open space. However, once the construction phase is completed, we work with community members as well as local governments to ensure the integration of the solar park into the landscape. Through the use of various techniques such as setbacks, land forming, strategic placement of mature trees, vegetation and fencing, our goal is for the solar project to be inconspicuous to any passerby.
Land use	**Community Member #5:** • Concerned that the project is not in compliance with agricultural zoning. **<u>Proponent's Response</u>** One of the more frequent areas of interest from community members is regarding the apparent use of agricultural land for renewable energy development. The Ontario government has put in place regulations that forbid proponents from building only on certain types of land, including prime agriculture land. For further information regarding Canada Land Inventory, please visit: http://sis.agr.gc.ca/cansis/nsdb/cli/index.html

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	For more information on the Agricultural land use, please visit: http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/landuse/
Project location	**Community Member #6:** • Expressed that project should not be located in this area. **Proponent's Response** Ontario is a large and populous province. As of January 2014, Ontario has a population of over 13.6 million people, accounting for nearly 40% of the population of Canada. While the population is more heavily concentrated in major cities, those in the rural communities still need everything those living in cities do, including energy. With a growing population comes increased need for electricity. Renewables, and specifically in this case solar energy, can help meet the need for increased power supply. The Ontario government has put regulations* in place regarding the types of land on which proponents, such as SkyPower, can build. Your community has an abundance of the type of land on which solar projects can be built. This means landowners who would otherwise have unused land will be compensated for leasing the unused land to us. Our project will create local jobs in construction and trade, as well as support local jobs in manufacturing and engineering. The project would bring a net financial gain to your community. * Detailed information about agricultural land use can be found at: http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/landuse/
Electrocution & fire risk	**Community Member #7:** • Concerned about electrocution and fire. **Proponent's Response** SkyPower's solar parks are valued assets, and as such contain various security measures to ensure they are protected and operate safely. The perimeter of the site is enclosed in a fence that is approximately 10 feet tall. The fencing is in part to protect individuals from wandering onto the site, but also to screen the site from adjacent properties and public roads as much as possible.

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	Added to the security fencing are a series of cameras that are remotely accessible to help monitor the site, should anything be identified as a concern. The site itself is monitored remotely and can even be shut down remotely if an emergency occurs. The same remote control is available through the local distribution company as a precaution. The proponent will work diligently with the local and/or county fire department by sharing site layouts and any additional relevant information to ensure the safety of the community.
Disruption of aircraft & birds from solar panel glare	**Community Member #6:** • Concerned about solar panel glare to neighbouring residents. **<u>Proponent's Response</u>** Due to the nature of solar panel design, a common question many have is about glare and whether it is dangerous to aircraft and birds. The reality is that there is no nuisance or danger. SkyPower is proud to have constructed the first solar park on airport lands in Canada – demonstrating that, in fact, no plane has been distracted by the panels and that an airport can operate with no adverse effects due to solar panel proximity. The leading cause of glare at airports is the sun itself, especially when low on the horizon. It is in our best interest to use non-reflective panels so that any light reflected will not be absorbed or converted into electricity. Additionally, no identified issues have been raised with any type of birds at our solar plants. Occasionally, some birds nest and care for their young under the panels. This area is safe from natural predators because of perimeter fencing and thus allows the birds to flourish. The potential for any impact on birds and other fauna are rigorously investigated through the Renewable Energy Approval (REA) process.
Panel life span	**Community Member #7:** • Asked "How long do the panels last?" **<u>Proponent's Response</u>** Solar photovoltaic panels have a life span of 20 to 25 years, which coincides with the life of the project. Some panels may require replacement from time to time, but the majority of panels will endure the noted lifetime. In terms of waste materials, much of the solar park components are recyclable, including solar panels, as well as racking and support structures.