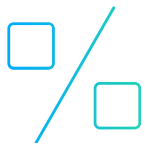


Hopkins Energy Solar Project

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# Your Questions, *Answered!*





## ***How much of the site will be paved in concrete?***

Very little concrete will be used to build the Hopkins Energy Solar Project. On a total acreage basis, the amount of concrete used will round to zero percent. Only one-third of an acre – out of 1,850 acres – will be covered in concrete or 0.02% of the project site.

Consistent with the project's low-impact design, we will use no concrete foundations for the solar panels or inverters. In addition, no concrete structures will be used, or needed, to divert stormwater.



## ***How much sound will the solar project create?***

Solar power is the quietest form of electricity generation. The panels themselves are completely silent since they contain no moving parts. Inverters – which convert electricity from direct to alternating current – make noise but can only be heard if you are standing very close to them. Inverters at the Hopkins site will be no closer than ~150 yards from the nearest inhabited structure and will be virtually inaudible.

Similarly, the transformer in the new substation will not be heard by those living around the project as it has been purposefully sited ~900 yards from the nearest residence. The only other sound the Hopkins solar project will create will occur when the panels slowly rotate to follow the sun. Only a faint “click” can be heard in 10 to 15-minute intervals, and



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only if you are standing right at the fence line. The electric motor which turns the panels is located in the middle of each row, not the ends, and will be inaudible.

Sound levels decrease, of course, as your distance increases. As a result, sound generated by the facility will generally not be audible beyond existing ambient noise levels at the project fence line.

And naturally, the inverters don't make any sound at night since there is no sunlight.



## ***How safe are the panels?***

The panels are very safe. It's important to note that the project will use panels — not mirrors. That means there will be no (blinding) beams of light and no scorched birds. The panels are designed to absorb light not reflect it.

Hopkins Solar will use only high-quality panels considered “bankable” by large U.S. banks and financial institutions. The panels do not represent a risk to human health or the environment and are non-hazardous according to EPA testing procedures. In addition, the panels will produce no hazardous fumes, gases or runoff and meet UL solar panel safety standards. They will only produce clean, low-cost electricity..

You can get further information on the health and safety of these panels in the “Health and Safety Impacts of Solar Photovoltaics” report, which is available for download at [www.ENGIEuswind.com/projects/hopkins](http://www.ENGIEuswind.com/projects/hopkins).





## ***What about flooding?***

The Hopkins Solar Project poses no additional flooding risk to the area. First, no solar panels will be located within a FEMA 100-year flood zone or in areas prone to standing water. Second, only relatively small amounts of concrete will be required to build the project. And third, very little tree clearing is needed. (See the questions: “How much of the site will be paved in concrete?” and “How many trees will be cleared to make way for the project?”).

ENGIE has already completed a hydrology study that identifies water flows which will serve as the basis for a required Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan filed with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. Runoff and erosion control measures will be included in this plan. More than a dozen naturally vegetated stormwater retention basins will be installed throughout the project footprint to retain stormwater from excessive rainfall events on-site, and no concrete structures will be installed to divert stormwater.

To further stabilize the site after construction is completed, ENGIE will re-seed it in accordance with the requirements of the Texas Stormwater General Permit for Construction Activities. ENGIE will also re-seed an additional 10% of the project site with pollinator-friendly vegetation intended to create habitat for and attract pollinators and other beneficial species to the area.





## ***Will the panels withstand severe weather events? What about hail?***

Solar panels are designed for outdoor use. Accordingly, they are ruggedly made with multiple layers of resilient materials including tempered glass, plastic polymers and aluminum frames. Each panel is sealed and waterproof. As a result, they can withstand extreme weather conditions such as high winds, intense heat, heavy rain, hailstorms and the accumulation of snow and ice.

The project is specifically built to withstand the powerful wind and thunderstorms common in North Texas according to standards set by the American Society of Civil Engineering. In addition, the panels can resist a direct hit from golf ball size hail and even larger when the panels are stowed vertically ahead of incoming storms.

The solar array at the Hopkins Energy Solar Project will nevertheless be fully insured for rapid repair and replacement, if needed, in the case of severe weather or a natural disaster.



## ***How many trees will be cleared to make way for the solar project?***

Fewer than 100 acres, and probably closer to 50 acres, out of 1,850 will require clearing – or less than 3% of the site. Historic aerial imagery shows that most of the project site was cleared of trees as far back as 1964.





## ***Were public meetings held and notices made about the project?***

Yes. A total of nine public hearings and two town hall meetings were hosted by the original developer and ENGIE. The public hearings were properly noticed in the Sulphur Springs News-Telegram. An invitation to the first town hall, held in August 2019, was sent to all immediate neighbors surrounding the project based on the owners listed in the county's land records.

In addition, a project land representative began reaching out in late 2018 – through phone calls and in-person meetings – to landowners adjacent to the project site about leasing their property. On-going contacts, or attempted contacts, by land representatives working for the project continued on a regular basis until early 2021.

The project has also been covered extensively in the local media with 18 stories published on KSST Radio's website and more than 10 stories published by the Sulphur Springs News-Telegram since June 2019.



## ***Who is ENGIE?***

ENGIE is the owner of the Hopkins Energy Solar Project. They are the world's largest independent power producer, headquartered in France, with their North American headquarters located in Houston. ENGIE has conducted business in Texas for nearly 40 years and employs more than 900 people in the state. The company has projects in 20 Texas counties and cities that account for two gigawatts of renewable energy and an investment of \$2 billion in the Lone Star State.

Equally important, ENGIE is known for building quality projects that are safely constructed, environmentally friendly and contribute to the local community.



## ***What about the decommissioning of the project?***

At the end of the project's 35-year life, ENGIE will pay for the removal of all project components and restore the land as closely as possible to its current condition.

We have specific contractual obligations in our lease with landowners to remove the

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equipment on their property so it can be returned to its previous use. This is also backed by a removal bond.

In addition, ENGIE goes above and beyond U.S. requirements for the recycling or donation of project equipment at the end of its useful life. We have successfully worked with multiple recycling contractors throughout Texas and the United States.



## ***How will this affect my viewshed?***

A solar project has the lowest sightlines of any form of electricity generation. The panels will only be eight feet high when at full rotation. As stated elsewhere, the panels are also designed to absorb light, not reflect it. In addition, screening vegetation at select locations will minimize viewshed impacts. For examples of how the project and surrounding landscaping may look, please download our town hall presentation at [www.ENGIEuswind.com/projects/hopkins](http://www.ENGIEuswind.com/projects/hopkins).



## ***What kind of environmental impacts will occur because of the solar farm?***

Solar PV farms are the most environmentally friendly form of electricity generation, and ENGIE has gone to great lengths to help ensure the Hopkins Energy Solar Project will have minimal impacts on the surrounding area.

The company has already completed a Biological Resources Assessment, a Cultural Resources Assessment, a Raptor and Nesting Bird Survey, and a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment with no findings of concern. There were no threatened or endangered species, or active raptor nests identified on the site during field surveys. ENGIE has also completed a wetlands delineation, a geotechnical investigation, a hydrology study and topographical surveys.

In fact, compared to other forms of electricity generation, the Hopkins Solar Project will benefit the environment. According to Department of Energy calculators, the CO<sub>2</sub> to be displaced by the project is equivalent to that captured by 567,800 acres of U.S. forests in one year.



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