TIMOTHY C. BUHL, P.E.

187 Burtis Point Road
Auburn, NY 13021
(607) 423-1919

November 24, 2025

Michael Park, Town Supervisor
Town of Homer
31 N Main Street
Homer, NY 13077

RE: Town of Homer
Seaboard Solar Operations, LLC
331 Houghton Hill Road
Engineering Review of Design Plans,
LFEAF, SWPPP, Decommissioning Plan,
& O&M Plan

Dear Supervisor Park & Town Board Members:

I received the initial project information regarding the above proposed facility from the Town CEO on September 22, 2025, and later a full plan package (Full Plan Sets, LFEAF, SWPPP, O&M Plan, Decommission Plan, and several supporting documents from the Town Attorney, Mr. Dan Ellis Officer on October 22, 2025. I believe I have all the key submittals for my review, along with comment from by County and Town Planning staff members.

This letter is to summarize my initial engineering review of the documents submitted as they relate to the Town's Subdivision and Site Plan Review Ordinances.

To begin with, while the submittal is preliminary in nature, (lacking in detail in areas), it has the positive aspects of being remote and in a low-density area. But in my opinion, the permit package submitted is lacking in specific details relating to this particular site. For example, the method of array mounting, racking embedment details, fencing details, & the erosion control sections only reference the generic types & components, all subject to change. Seeding, regrading & reclamation measures for disturbed soil areas show a New England seeding mix along roadway areas, and down the steeper OH electrical tie-in point down to the east at West Scott Road. This area will require special attention, as it is very steep and shallow to bedrock. There are only a few references to this exact site - the vegetative buffer/grass filter strips along the access roadway are noted, along

with silt fences, and a few temporary silt socks/straw wattles, but no permanent infiltration trenches or retention basins are shown in the steeper array areas running perpendicular to the ground contours. Most of the descriptions of the plans and procedures to be used are generic in nature, and no specific mention is made as to the protection measures to be used for the steep power line feed down to the east, or for dealing with the Shallow to bedrock Montauk soils that dominate the site. Apparently, no soil borings or test pits have been taken in the areas of disturbance, and with average bedrock depths of only 20" to 40", there are potential problem with array anchoring and any re-grading of the steeper site slopes to lessen slopes below the 8% threshold. It would also be helpful to outline any and all tree removals on the site, and note the total acreage removed for actual construction and that for just solar access. The site plans should indicate all the tree removal limits.

On a smaller note, the LFEAF should be modified to reflect that the Cortland County Sheriff (not the Homer Police) will be responsible for public protection at this site, and an additional 2 +/- acres of mature tree removals should be added to the acreage totals, due to the off-property interconnect route tree removals.

One of our main concerns is the preliminary SWPPP document which shows only general boundaries & areas and just two design points for the entire site. No sub-catchments have been noted on the drawings, even though they are referenced in the modeling calculations. In our opinion, there should be at least 3 design points for this site. Design Point 1 needs more review, as it appears the subject pond is isolated from the upstream array runoff by an existing shallow ditch running east-west. An additional design point should be added where this stream crosses under Houghton Hill Road. This document should be revisited before finalization of the SWPPP. That said, the applicant should provide a similar analysis for the 10- and 100-year storm events as required by the NYSDEC. This is especially desirable for arrays in areas running perpendicular to the site contours.

I have these concerns based on our experience on a similar solar site in Cortlandville (the Active Solar project on NYS Route 215), which also has direct down-gradient arrays perpendicular to the contour of the land. There has been severe erosion and runoff problems during construction, even with just localized thunderstorms. This has resulted in soil down-wasting, erosion, and flooding of the lower adjacent properties, due to equipment ruts, soil compaction, and lack of proper controls that all contributed to these problems, and this project is very similar in nature to the W. Scott Road site. Last July the NYSDEC issued new guidance and requirements for solar sites, particularly those with over 8% slopes in array areas (see the attached). It requires re-grading or the use of special retention practices in these steeper areas. With shallow bedrock concerns, the applicant should show how and where this problem will be addressed. In our opinion, the SWPPP should be upgraded to cover these items, and new pre- and post-project runoff models be run to document these conditions. The NYSDEC required practices on steeper slopes should be provided, especially for the steeper Design Point 2. The sub-catchments shown in the Hydrograph Modeling should be detailed on the site plans – none are shown.

The Decommissioning Bond amount presented may not be sufficient to cover the equipment removals and land restoration necessary once the solar farm ends its useful life. According to NYS Law, a bond must be posted (in favor of the host municipality) at the start of a solar project, and

be of sufficient total amount to cover the total removal of all array equipment, inverters, racking, cabling, roads, poles, fencing and all other items necessary the completely restore the site

to its original condition. The budget numbers used apparently were taken from a NYSERDA study published in 2022. This study was based on a 2 MW facility in Massachusetts and has been used as basis by many solar permit applicants who typically scale the costs up the appropriate MW of the proposed solar installation.

This is exactly what was done by the applicant in this instance. Each individual line item in the NYSERDA estimate was simply multiplied by a factor of 2.5 (2 MW up to 5 MW for this project) in order to obtain the final amount listed in the decommissioning estimate ($150,525). It is then inflated at 2.5% per year over the projected useful life of the project. The only problem is that the NYSERDA study specially states that their cost listed are for Massachusetts project only, and may not be applicable for projects in other states, and that disposal costs, recycling credits, disposal fees, and transportation cost all may vary depending on markets, the materials used, and distances to market and recycling centers, as well as any unique site features such as long access roads, grid tie-in distances, site conditions, and even the type of panels/racking used. In this particular case, we would recommend that the project engineer should do a site-specific evaluation and cost estimate that reflects the actual local costs to remove the equipment and restore the site, instead of just a generic estimate scale-up, which could potentially be an insufficient amount for this specific site.

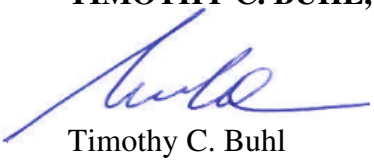
I have also reviewed The Town's Current Zoning Law and have the following comments. It appears the project design drawings generally meet the requirements of the Law. The project meets all the lot coverage, setbacks. panel height, signs, fencing, and decommissioning requirements (except for the cost concern issues mentioned above), with only a few exceptions. No tree removal areas or new offset plannings or visual buffers are shown on the drawings. These should be included should all be addressed in an updated plan submittal. Further, the ordinance states that all cabling and transmission lines should be underground, which is true on-site work, but not for the off-site transmission connection down to West Scott Road. No easement or agreement for a lease or purchase of the strip of land and the National Grid interconnection parcel has been provided. There are also concerns about the long, steep Design Point 2 (with no runoff control practices shown) which will cause washouts of West Scott Road during high intensity rainfall events.

In terms of the operation and maintenance plan for the project, we believe it a positive thing that electronic monitoring and reporting of the array systems will be done continuously. The mowing schedule outlined for the growing season is also acceptable. We do have concerns that the site inspections for erosion and washouts should be done weekly during construction, at least monthly post-construction, due to the steeper slopes in some sections of the arrays and especially for the electrical interconnection route down to West Scott Road. As another side note, the reference in the O&M document to the Town of Moreau should be revised to the Town of Homer.

The bottom line is that I feel the applicant should provide the Town with more detailed information at this stage of the in the submittal process, as well as address the recent NYSDEC requirements attached for the steeper sections of the disturbance areas. I would suggest that the Town should

schedule a meeting with key project individuals to discuss these concerns and any other issues that crop up before proceeding with the SEQRA process and for any permit approvals.

Very truly yours,
TIMOTHY C. BUHL, P.E.



Timothy C. Buhl

Cc: Dan Ellis, Town Atty, Kevin McMahon, CEO

C: tcbpe/projects/2548/Homer Solar Review