



Environmental Assessment for the Lease of Property to Support Construction and Operation of a Solar Photovoltaic System at Naval Air Station Oceana, Virginia Beach, Virginia

The Proposed Action

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Navy is preparing an environmental assessment (EA) for the lease of property to support construction and operation of a solar photovoltaic (PV) system at Naval Air Station (NAS) Oceana located in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The Navy proposes to lease up to approximately 94 acres of land at NAS Oceana to be developed by an independently operated commercial power utility provider for a solar PV system. The generated electricity would supply the existing commercial electrical grid.

Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

The purpose of the proposed action is to increase NAS Oceana energy security and resource availability through the development of renewable-energy generating assets. The proposed action is needed to assist in meeting the federal policies, goals, and standards for renewable energy.

Site Location

The project site is located at the southwestern boundary of NAS Oceana near the intersection of London Bridge Road and Dam Neck Road. The site encompasses approximately 94 acres and would allow the construction and operation of a 13.4 megawatt (MW) ground-mounted solar PV system.

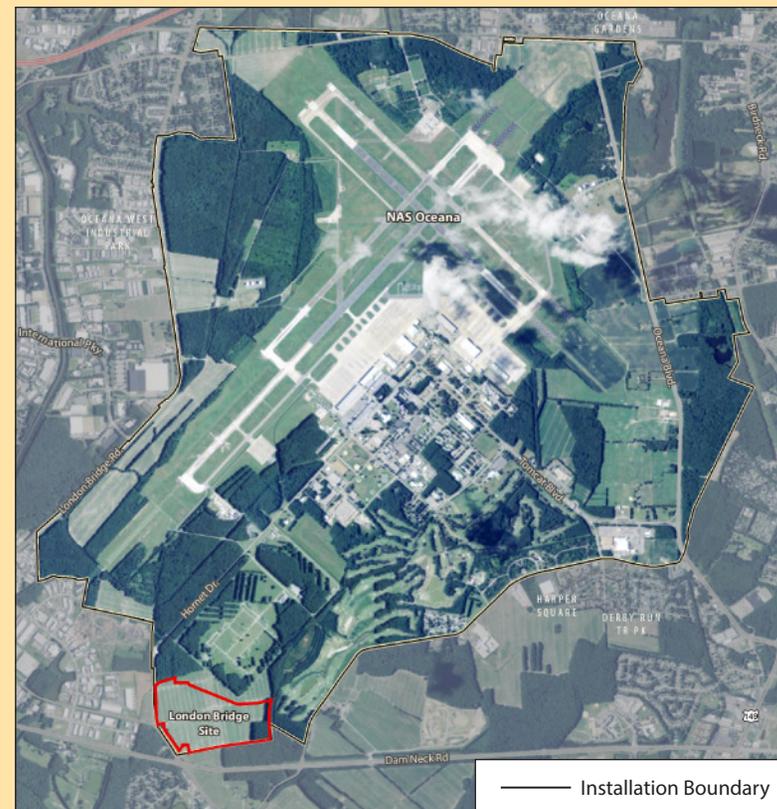
Most of the site is used for growing crops under the Navy's agricultural outleasing program. Approximately 7 acres in the southeastern corner of the site is a mix of pine and hardwood forestland.

The proposed development area at the site has been selected to avoid wetlands and potential archaeological resources. Selective tree clearing and protective measures will be used to minimize potential impacts to sensitive species. The EA will analyze the site for development of a solar PV facility. However, the parcel boundaries may not be representative of the final project footprint. The project would be developed by the power utility provider and/or developer within the identified parcel.



Scope of the EA

The EA will present the existing conditions at the proposed project site, and evaluate the potential consequences of the proposed action on the natural and human environment. The EA will evaluate potential impacts of the proposed action on the following resource areas: land use, coastal zone management, visual resources, utilities and infrastructure, socioeconomic and environmental justice, cultural resources, air quality, biological resources, water resources, hazardous materials and waste, topography and soils, noise, traffic and transportation, and public safety. The Navy is consulting on the proposed action with key agencies, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Catawba Indian Nation, and the United Keetoowah Band of the Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma.



Proposed NAS Oceana Project Site



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Solar PV Technology

Solar PV technology uses solar cells to convert energy from solar radiation into electricity. The ground-mounted facility to be constructed would include solar PV panels assembled in arrays, as well as electrical equipment (such as inverters, facility components, and electrical lines and wiring) to complete the generation of electricity and connect the solar PV facility to existing electrical infrastructure.

Ground-mounted Solar Arrays

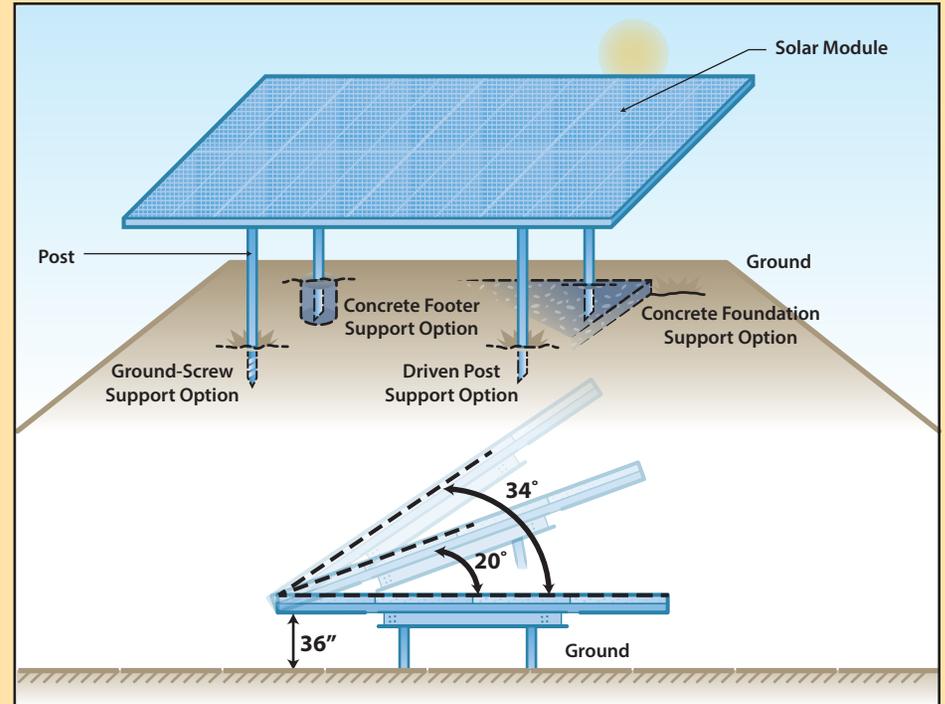


Federal Policies, Goals, and Standards for Renewable Energy

To enhance energy security, efficiency, and sustainability, the federal government has established rigorous policies, goals, and standards for the production and use of alternative and renewable energy by federal facilities, including:

- Secretary of the Navy renewable energy goals:
 - 1 Gigawatt (GW) Initiative: Deploy 1 GW of renewable-energy generating capacity Navy-wide by 2020.
 - By 2020, produce or procure at least 50% of electricity consumed by shore-based facilities from alternative energy sources, and 50% of Navy installations must be “net zero” (i.e., use alternative energy sources to meet or exceed the electricity they consume).
- Executive Order 13693, Planning for Federal Sustainability in the Next Decade (March 2015): By 2025, increase the share of electricity the federal government consumes from renewable sources to 30%.
- Other Standards: Energy Policy Act of 2005; 10 U.S.C. 2911(e).

Fixed-Tilt Ground-Mounted Solar PV Construction



To request more information, or to comment on the proposed action, please write:

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