



September 18, 2024

Ryan Solum
3270 S Dahlia St
Denver, GA 30305

**RE: MH680 Solar
Consultation Program
EcoCAT Review #2503860
McHenry County**

Dear Mr. Solum:

The Department has received your submission for this project for the purposes of consultation pursuant to the *Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act* [520 ILCS 10/11], the *Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act* [525 ILCS 30/17], and Title 17 *Illinois Administrative Code* Part 1075.

The proposed action consists of the construction of a roughly 40-acre commercial solar energy facility with associated sidewalks, roads, and utilities in McHenry County, IL.

The Illinois Natural Heritage Database shows the following protected resources may be in the vicinity of the project location:

State Threatened or Endangered Species
Blanding's Turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*)
Rusty-patched Bumble Bee (*Bombus affinis*)

Due to the project scope and proximity to protected resources, the Department offers the following comments and recommends the following actions be taken to avoid adversely impacting listed species in the vicinity of the project:

Blanding's Turtle

EcoCAT has indicated records for the state-listed Blanding's Turtle in vicinity of the project area. The Department recommends:

- Exclusionary fencing should be installed to partition off any wetland areas before the active season (March 1st - November 1st). Exclusionary fencing should be trenched into the ground (a minimum of 4 inches) and inspected daily for Blanding's Turtles.

- Alternatively, a survey for Blanding's Turtle may be conducted to determine if the turtle is present within the project area. The principal investigator should obtain a Scientific Collectors Permit and T&E Permit from the Department to conduct such work. A survey proposal should be sent to this office for concurrence on methods, along with the results for final comment.

Rusty-patched Bumble Bee

The Department has determined that adverse impacts to this species are unlikely.

Please note that due to the federal status of the Rusty-patched Bumble Bee, and its potential occurrence in the project area, coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service may be necessary and is separate from this consultation and Illinois State regulations.

Given the above recommendations are adopted, the Department has determined that impacts to these protected resources are unlikely. The Department has determined impacts to other protected resources in the vicinity of the project location are also unlikely.

In accordance with 17 Ill. Adm. Code 1075.40(h), please notify the Department of your decision regarding these recommendations.

Consultation on the part of the Department is closed, unless the applicant desires additional information or advice related to this proposal. Consultation for Part 1075 is valid for two years unless new information becomes available which was not previously considered; the proposed action is modified; or additional species, essential habitat, or Natural Areas are identified in the vicinity. If the action has not been implemented within two years of the date of this letter, or any of the above listed conditions develop, a new consultation is necessary.

The natural resource review reflects the information existing in the Illinois Natural Heritage Database at the time of the project submittal and should not be regarded as a final statement on the project being considered, nor should it be a substitute for detailed site surveys or field surveys required for environmental assessments. If additional protected resources are unexpectedly encountered during the project's implementation, the applicant must comply with the applicable statutes and regulations.

This letter does not serve as permission to take any listed or endangered species. As a reminder, no take of an endangered species is permitted without an Incidental Take Authorization or the required permits. Anyone who takes a listed or endangered species without an Incidental Take Authorization or required permit may be subject to criminal and/or civil penalties pursuant to the *Illinois Endangered Species Act*, the *Fish and Aquatic Life Act*, the *Wildlife Code* and other applicable authority.

The Department also offers the following conservation measures be considered to help protect native wildlife and enhance natural areas in the project area:

- The Department strongly recommends that the project proponent establish pollinator-friendly habitat as groundcover wherever feasible. Solar Site Pollinator Establishment Guidelines can be found here: <https://dnr.illinois.gov/conservation/pollinatorscorecard.html>
- The site should be de-compacted before planting.
- Long term management of the site should be planned for prior to development to ensure successful native pollinator habitat establishment and prevent the spread of invasive species throughout the lifetime of this project. An experienced ecological management consultant should be hired to assist with long-term management.
- Required fencing, excluding areas near or adjacent to public access areas, should have a 6-inch gap along the bottom to prevent the restriction of wildlife movement. Woven wire or a suitable habitat wildlife friendly fence should be used. Barbed wire should be avoided.
- If tree clearing is necessary, the Department recommends removing trees between November 1st and March 31st to avoid impacts to the state-listed bats and birds.
- Any required night lighting should follow International Dark-Sky Association's (IDA) Five Principles for Responsible Outdoor Lighting to minimize the effect of light pollution on wildlife: [Five Principles for Responsible Outdoor Lighting | DarkSky International](#)

Please contact Isabella Newingham (Isabella.newingham@illinois.gov) with any questions about this review.

Sincerely,



Bradley Hayes
Manager, Impact Assessment Section
Division of Real Estate Services and Consultation
Office of Realty & Capital Planning
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, IL 62702
Bradley.Hayes@Illinois.gov
Phone: (217) 782-0031