



Upper Peninsula Power Company

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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UPPER PENINSULA POWER COMPANY

SIGNS AGREEMENT FOR NEW SOLAR FARM IN ESCANABA TOWNSHIP

The Road to Improved Environmental Performance and Decarbonization

Marquette - Upper Peninsula Power Company (UPPCO) has entered into an agreement with Chandler Solar Project LLC, a joint venture between affiliates of Orion Renewable Energy Group LLC and MAP® Energy, LLC, for the purchase of renewable energy that will be generated by a new 125-megawatt utility scale solar energy facility in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. When added to the output from the company's existing hydroelectric generation resources, the solar project increases the amount of renewable energy being delivered to UPPCO's customers to more than 50% of their total consumption by the end of 2022.

The project is expected to save UPPCO's customers over \$20 Million in energy costs over the next 25 years and is part of the company's Integrated Resource Plan pending before the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC). UPPCO began developing its Integrated Resource Plan in 2018 by holding a series of public listening forums. During the forums, UPPCO asked its customers for input on how best to source its energy requirements in the future. "This is a great project that lowers energy costs for our customers and is better for the environment, two of the most important messages we heard from our customers," said Jim Larsen, Chief Executive Officer.

"At the end of our planning process, we concluded the solar energy resources in the Delta County area were some of the best in the State, even better than most of Michigan's Lower Peninsula," said Brett French, VP of Communications and Business Development. "Delta County is known as the *Banana Belt* for good reason. With reduced cloud cover, low average humidity and long summer days, the area is a great location for the production of solar energy using modern technology."

The Chandler Solar Project will be located within Escanaba Township. It is anticipated that the facility will create up to 200 construction jobs and pay more than \$10 Million in property taxes



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over a twenty-five-year period. The land rights necessary for the project have already been obtained and local permitting is underway. Construction is expected to begin in 2021 with a 2022 in-service date. The project is contingent on receiving final approvals from the MPSC, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and other state and local governmental entities.

*Note to Media: Project Fact Sheet included with this release.*

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## Chandler Solar Project – Fact Sheet

This Fact Sheet summarizes key aspects of the Chandler Solar Project as proposed for Escanaba Township in the Special Land Use Application. Please refer to the Application and its exhibits for further information.

**Local Benefits** – Benefits from Chandler Solar include: Between \$10-\$15 million of increased local property tax revenues depending on Project size, which support vital services and may result in lower property tax rates for Escanaba Township residents in the future; new jobs during construction and operation; additional income for family farms; farmland able to return to agricultural production at the end of Project life; and maintenance of groundcover, including non-invasive pollinator plant species for insects and birds, which preserves wildlife habitat and soil quality for the future.

**Electricity Supply** – Chandler Solar will connect to the utility grid in Escanaba Township, so power generated by the project is supplied to local electricity customers.

**Solar Cost** – Large-scale solar energy is one of the cheapest sources of electricity available in Michigan. Chandler Solar will supply electricity at a cost below the current average wholesale cost in the area.

**Sound** – Solar power generation is quiet and produces minimal sound. Escanaba Township's Zoning Ordinance limits sound produced by Chandler Solar to 60 decibels as measured at the nearest property line, but actual sound produced will be below 45 decibels – see the [Sound Simulations](#) report attached to the Application as Exhibit F. For examples of sound levels, see <https://www.uofmhealth.org/health-library/tf4173>.

**Lighting** – Night-time lighting at Chandler Solar will be turned off unless motion or switch-activated, and will be limited to access gates, an operations and maintenance building, and a substation. These locations are marked on the [Site Plan](#) attached to the Application as Exhibit A. All lights will have covers that direct light downward, and will be turned off during normal conditions.

**Property Values** – Independent studies of installed large-scale solar energy projects throughout the U.S., including Michigan, show that they have no relationship to neighboring property values – see the [Property Valuation](#) report attached to the Application as Exhibit C.

**Health and Safety** – Solar power plants do not produce pollutants or other byproducts that are dangerous to humans and the environment. Solar power generation generally displaces older inefficient fossil fuel resources, so the overall impact of solar energy on human health is overwhelmingly positive – see [The Health and Safety Impacts of Solar Photovoltaics](#) report attached to the Application as Exhibit D.

The Chandler Solar Special Land Use Application and Site Plan are available on the Escanaba Township website at <http://www.escanabatownship.org/calendar>.