



## CHUGACH SOLAR FARM- FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**CHUGACH SOLAR FARM**

9.6 MW Solar Farm  
Approximately 24,000 solar panels  
Produces energy to support ~1,300 homes  
Offsets ~15 million pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> per year  
\$12 million, funded by private investment  
20-30 construction jobs, 5-10 part-time maintenance jobs  
Project in development stage, estimated construction: 2022

Contact us through [www.renewableipp.com](http://www.renewableipp.com)

### 1. Project overview

Renewable IPP is currently in the development stage for the Chugach Solar Farm project. We're working to lease the land, complete detailed grid studies, agree on power purchase terms with Chugach Electric and finalize private investment to fund the project. This project is in very early stages and we'll be following all the required Municipality of Anchorage review and public comment steps. We've done early engagement with surrounding community councils to get early feedback and we're currently mapping out the MOA review process to define next steps which will determine if the proposed land can be used for the project.

If the project land, electricity contract and financing are approved, we hope to build the solar farm with local labor in 2022 or 2023. This project represents \$12M of private investment in renewable energy infrastructure and will create ~20-30 construction jobs and 5-10 part-time maintenance jobs (30-year solar farm operation). We'll be employing low impact solar design and construction methods to maintain the wetland functionality which also diversifying Anchorage's energy sources to meet our Climate Action Plan goal to reduce greenhouse gases by 40% by 2030. The solar farm will not increase electricity prices to Chugach Electric members.

### 2. How will the solar farm benefit the Anchorage Community?

**Jobs-** The Chugach Solar Farm is estimated to create ~20-30 seasonal construction jobs. These jobs will be filled with local labor. An additional 5-10 part-time solar farm maintenance jobs will be created for snow removal and other maintenance for the 30-year life of the facility.

**Economic Development-** The Chugach Solar Farm is entirely funded by private investors who take advantage of the Federal Tax Incentives and pass the project cost savings onto the Anchorage community through low- cost energy. This project provides \$12 million in private investment, helping diversify Alaska's economy. A recent report developed by the Alaska Center for Energy and Power and the Alaska Economic Development Center estimates for every dollar spent on solar, an additional \$0.43 is generated and circulated throughout Alaska's economy

**Reduced Carbon Footprint-** It is estimated the Chugach Solar Farm will reduce Anchorage's greenhouse gas emissions by 15 million pounds per year (the equivalent of taking 1,500 cars off the road). The carbon footprint from solar farm material manufacturing and construction will be offset in by the solar farm in 1-3 years. With a 30-year operational life, this means the solar farm provides at least 27 years of carbon reduction benefits. Finally, the Municipality of Anchorage established a Climate Action Plan and this solar farm helps Anchorage meet their goal of 40% carbon reduction by 2030.

**Energy Diversification & Modernization-** Cook Inlet natural gas generates about 70% of electricity along the Railbelt (Homer to Fairbanks). A 2018 State Report on Cook Inlet Gas Availability shows that while natural gas resources are available, the price to supply this gas will increase in the late 2020s as operators spend development dollars to access harder to reach reserves. Solar energy diversifies Anchorage's energy and helps extend existing low-cost gas supply. The project is funded by private investors providing renewable energy without increasing cost to Chugach Electric ratepayers or Anchorage taxpayers.

**New Walking Space & Educational Signs:** A ~1.4-mile earthen walking trail will be provided around the solar farm fence for community use. Interpretive signs about solar energy will be posted along the walking trail for education opportunities.

### **3. Who is Renewable IPP?**

Renewable IPP is an "Alaska Grown" company which started-up in 2017. The company was founded by four long time Alaska residents who are all engineers with decades of energy industry experience. We develop, build and operate the solar farms we create and have a long-term (30-year) interest in our projects and working with the local community. We are fully committed to responsible development. The four partners built the Willow Pilot project themselves and have learned the business first hand. We proudly developed, built and operate Alaska's largest solar farm, the 1.2 MW Willow Solar Farm. Our mission is to deliver economic renewable energy and we are excited to be growing the solar energy industry in Alaska. Find out more at [www.renewableipp.com](http://www.renewableipp.com)

### **4. Who gets the energy? What happens to electric rates?**

100% of the electricity generated by the solar farm will be sold to Chugach Electric who will distribute the renewable energy to their members (the Anchorage community and points south). The project's electricity will be sold to Chugach at its avoided cost rate (essentially the value of the fuel saved by the project). This means there will be no impact to electric rates.

**5. Where will the Chugach Solar Farm be located?**

The solar farm will be located on approximately 65 acres of the 109-acre vacant parcel between Minnesota, Strawberry, Raspberry and Northwood. This parcel is owned by the Heritage Land Bank and Renewable IPP is requesting a 30-year lease for the purpose of siting the solar farm.

**6. Will vegetative buffers be provided? What access will be available for the Anchorage Community?**

A 60-foot vegetative buffer along Northwood will be reserved to maintain trees which help block sound and light from Minnesota. There will also be a 60-foot vegetative buffer along the South section line to maintain access to Strawberry Lake. The solar farm will be fenced to ensure public safety and security. A ~1.4-mile, public walking trail with educational interpretive signs will be provided around the solar farm fence for community use.

**7. The solar farm is being built on a wetland, how does the design prevent/mitigate impacts? (updated)**

The proposed solar farm land is classified as a wetland. The solar farm construction plans and design follow best practices, as described in a Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation report, which minimize wetland impacts and maintain wetland functionality long term. Construction will be performed either in winter (frozen ground) or using protective mats and tracked equipment during summer to prevent ground compaction and maintain current hydrology. The foundation design uses piles which are a best practice for solar farms in wetlands as they maintain hydraulic functionality. Finally, solar rows are 12-15 feet wide with 50 feet spacing between rows. It is recommended that the solar row width be used as minimum spacing (e.g. 12-15 feet) to preserve existing biology. This solar farm design provides 3-4 times the recommended spacing. For more information on this, please see our "Solar in Wetlands- Information Sharing" summary.

**8. Why not install the solar farm on commercial roofs instead? (new)**

To date, Alaska has installed 8 MW of solar. The proposed Chugach Solar Farm more than doubles Alaska's installed solar capacity taking serious action towards our climate action plan goals. Utility scale, ground mounted solar allows for larger installations and at ~1/3 of the cost of rooftop solar, providing economic renewable energy for everyone. Power will be sold to the Utility at wholesale prices (~\$0.05-\$0.06/kWh) vs. retail prices (~\$0.18/kWh) typically received by rooftop installation. In sum, ground mounted utility scale solar allows us to make material progress to fight climate change and delivers energy at ~1/3 the cost to the public. Finally, Alaska legislation does not allow for third party electricity sales to commercial users (e.g. Costco, hospitals, etc) as we have utility Co-Ops with committed market regions.

**9. What other sites were considered? (new)**

Renewable IPP conducted a broad land search over the last year considering land options inside and outside the Anchorage Bowl. Pt. MacKenzie, Beluga River and numerous Anchorage land locations were considered but not selected due to environmental disturbance, logistics complexity, inadequate acreage (<10 acres), shade issues or because a solar farm was not the best use of the land. This land review

included both undeveloped vacant land and “brownfield” (previously developed) land. The Strawberry/Minnesota property was identified as the best location.

**10. Is this the best use of the land? (new)**

Siting a solar farm on the HLB land allows the Municipality of Anchorage to maintain functional wetlands while making material progress to their climate action plan and introducing economic development. The land is considered low value for commercial buildings given the soils.

**11. How big is the solar farm?**

The solar farm is planned to be 9.6 megawatts (~24,000 solar panels). Technical grid studies (conducted by Chugach Electric) will confirm the final system size. The Chugach Solar Farm will occupy approximately 65-acres of the 109-acre parcel and generate enough energy to support 1,300 homes.

**12. Will the solar farm cause my property taxes to go up or could it de-value my home?**

The solar farm will not affect adjacent home values or property taxes as it’s “not comparable” to a home.

**13. What steps are required for this project to proceed, and what if the project doesn’t go forward? (updated)**

In order for the project to move forward, the land lease must be approved by the Anchorage Assembly, a Power Purchase Agreement must be agreed with Chugach Electric and approved by the Regulatory Commission of Alaska, and private investors must agree to fund the project. In the near term, we’re currently engaging with the Municipality of Anchorage, Planning and Watershed Management Department to outline the review and public comment processes which will determine if the land can be used for the project. If these reviews find that the solar farm can be sited on the proposed land, then a lease will need to be approved by the Anchorage Assembly and there will be a public hearing with opportunity for public comment.

**14. How long will the solar farm operate?**

30 years. Renewable IPP is required to remove all equipment from the land (return to natural state) per the lease terms.

**15. Why is the solar farm named the “Chugach Solar Farm”?**

There is an amazing landscape view of the Chugach mountains from the solar farm site and Chugach Electric members will receive all the renewable energy generated by the solar farm so we decided to name it the “Chugach Solar Farm.”