**State of Maine Bureau of General Services RFP # 20231020**

**Responses to Bidder Questions**

Question 1. Are the meters for the accounts that will be allocated credits (35013985862 and 35012735615) located on the same parcel as the proposed project?

Response: Account 35013985862 is the primary electric account for the Maine State Prison, which is located on the same parcel as the proposed project. Account 35013985862 consumes approximately 5.8 million kilowatt-hours of grid electricity per year. Account 35012735615 is the primary account for the Maine Correctional Center in Windham, Maine. Account 35012735615 consumes approximately 1.8 million kilowatt-hours of grid electricity per year.

Question 2: Has there been any discussion with the Town regarding the permitting of the project? Are there any expected permitting issues given the recent solar moratorium and latest solar ordinance that recommends siting projects on land that is not identified as prime agricultural farmland?

Response: The Department of Corrections met the Town of Warren Planning Board on multiple occasions to review local permitting requirements and process for the project. The initial feedback the Department received on the project has been generally positive with the solar array’s lack of visibility from Cushing Road and surrounding properties. A copy of the Town of Warren’s solar ordinance is attached to this response. The Department is confident that based on current use of the proposed system site, the project will be able to achieve local permitting.

Question 3: How is the "Initial Period of Performance" that begins on Jan 1, 2024 defined in the RFP?

Response: The initial period of performance includes the period between the estimated date for the selected bidder to receive a preliminary notice to proceed from the Bureau of General Services (January 1, 2024) and the end of the initial 20-year lease term. For Part IV, Section III, Item 2 of the RFP (Implementation Work Plan), the Bureau of General Services would like to see a preliminary work plan and implementation schedule that starts on January 1, 2024, ends no later than July 1, 2026, and assumes CMP completes its second Midcoast cluster study by July 1, 2025.

Question 4: Given the space available in the fields identified during the bidder’s conference, is it ok to propose a system size over 2 MW but below the original system size of 4.98 MW?

Response: Yes. The RFP’s base submission requirement is a ground-mounted solar array with a nameplate generation capacity not to exceed 2 MW (measured in alternating current). Bidders may submit an additional sizing option to this base requirement for a ground-mounted solar array with nameplate generation capacity greater than 2 MW but not to exceed 4.98 MW.

Question 5: Are there any known grid upgrades being done by CMP that would delay the interconnection of this project?

Response: The Bureau of General Services and the project team are not aware of any grid upgrades being done by CMP that would delay the interconnection of this project. According to CMP, this project will be included in the second Midcoast cluster study to be conducted by CMP and ISO New England.

Question 6: Is there any way to estimate what the permitting costs would be with the Town of Warren? Is it correct to say that the Town of Warren is considering the permit for this project to be the same as permitting a building?

Response: The Bureau of General Services has not developed a cost estimate for a third party such as a solar developer to obtain applicable local permits for the proposed project. Bidders should list their assumption for local permitting cost in the bid submission.

Question 7: Can the power lines from the array be routed both underground and above ground along the roadway or through the field?

Response: The Bureau of General Services and the Department of Corrections are open to considering underground or overhead distribution line designs to connect the solar array to the roadside point of interconnection with CMP’s local distribution system along Cushing Road. Responses to the RFP should identify the bidder’s proposed route for this distribution line and whether the bidder is proposing an underground line, overhead line, or a mix of the two designs. As discussed at the bidders conference, bidders may propose running the distribution line through the field adjacent to the first segment of the dirt road if bidders believe this will produce a more cost-effective, reliable solution for connecting the solar array to the CMP point of interconnection.

Question 8: What is the width of the existing dirt roadway? Did the Town of Warren discuss having to widen/modify the road for the construction phase of the project? Do you anticipate any issues with widening the roadway, either physical (such as the presence of ledge) or with permitting through the town/DOT/DEP?

Response: The existing dirt road owned by the Maine State Prison that runs between Cushing Road and the proposed site of the solar array is approximately 10 feet wide. The Department of Corrections has not discussed widening the road with the Town of Warren. As discussed at the bidder’s conference, there has been ledge identified at certain points adjacent to the road. If bidders believe that the dirt road needs to be widened for the construction phase of the project, this must be noted in the RFP response. In addition, the selected bidder will be responsible for snow plowing on the dirt road and maintaining access to the solar array during the winter months for the lease term. The Department of Corrections does not currently plow the dirt road during the winter months.

Question 9: How was the $255,667 lump sum lease payment calculated? Is there flexibility on when this payment is made?

Response: The $255,667 figure includes the costs associated with initial project development that the Department of Corrections will have incurred by the conclusion of the RFP process. These costs include initial interconnection application fees paid to CMP, interconnection deposits paid to CMP as set forth in Appendix H, and consulting fees incurred by the Department. If a bidder cannot meet the requirements of the lease payment set forth in Part II, Section D, of the RFP, bidder must provide an explanation why the firm cannot meet this requirement and what alternative payment structure/timing bidder proposes.