

ECONOMY

# Virginia levies \$120K penalty for Henry County solar facility

*State inspectors said they found environmental violations at Energix Renewables' Sunny Rock Solar. This marks the fourth year in a row that the company has faced such civil penalties.*



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This photo from a Virginia Department of Environmental Quality inspection report from April shows what the DEQ said is erosion under solar panels at Sunny Rock Solar in Henry County. The erosion contributed to sediment being washed into nearby streams and wetlands, according to the DEQ.

A state agency has fined a utility-scale solar developer nearly \$121,000 after inspectors said they found violations of environmental regulations at a Henry County solar facility.

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality recently proposed the penalties after inspecting Energix Renewables' Sunny Rock Solar site [off Joseph Martin Highway](#), northwest of Ridgeway, in February and April.



This photo from a Virginia Department of Environmental Quality inspection report from April shows what the DEQ said is erosion under solar panels at Sunny Rock Solar in Henry County. The erosion contributed to sediment being washed into nearby streams and wetlands, according to the DEQ.

Inspectors said the company failed to control soil erosion and stormwater runoff and failed to keep sediment out of nearby streams and wetlands. Among other things, an inspection report pointed to channels of eroded soil around and underneath solar panels that the DEQ said contributed to sediment getting into nearby water during an April rainfall.

“There can be no doubt Energix was aware of its legal requirements in this case and there is no dispute it had control over the events constituting the violation,” according to a report from DEQ Enforcement Coordinator Gary Wooldridge and DEQ Director of Enforcement Kristen Sadtler.

This marks the [fourth year in a row](#) that Energix Renewables has faced DEQ penalties for its solar projects in Virginia. Its total penalties now stand at more than \$460,000.

Energix Renewables did not respond to a request for comment Tuesday, but documents posted online by the DEQ appear to show that the company has agreed to pay the penalties and correct the problems.

The inspections were conducted while Sunny Rock Solar was under construction. Energix [announced on May 6](#) that the facility was connected to the grid and generating electricity.

The 20-megawatt facility is on about 180 acres of land, though not all of that land is used for solar panels.

Energix Renewables is an Arlington-based subsidiary of Energix Group, which is based in Israel. The company also operates in Lithuania and Poland, according to its website.

Its [solar sites](#) in Southside and Southwest Virginia include others in Henry County, plus locations in Appomattox, Buckingham and Wythe counties.

The inspections at Sunny Rock Solar prompted civil penalties of \$65,424. The DEQ proposed another \$68,695.20 for “aggravating factors,” including Energix’s history of violations.

That totals \$134,119.20, but the DEQ took off 10% for Energix’s “cooperativeness and quick settlement,” lowering the figure to \$120,707.28, according to DEQ documents.

The DEQ posted the violation notices as two separate orders because they cover different aspects of Virginia regulations. It will accept public comments through July 30 for the [first order](#) and through August 27 for the [second](#), after which it will issue its final orders in the cases.