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TOWNSHIP OF ARMOUR

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September 5, 2025

Township of Armour
PO Box 533, 56 Ontario Street
Burk's Falls, Ontario
P0A 1C0

Subject: Peer Review of the Supplementary Planning Justification Report prepared by Zelinka Priamo Ltd. for the proposed BESS Facility at 219 Peggs Mountain Road, Armour Township.

Attn: Charlene Watt, Municipal Clerk

Dear Charlene Watt,

TULLOCH Engineering ("TULLOCH") has been retained to conduct a peer review of the Planning Justification Report submitted by SolarBank (the "Applicant") as part of a complete application package for an Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment. The proposed amendments have been submitted to permit the development of a Battery Energy Storage System ("BESS") facility located at 219 Peggs Mountain Road, in the Township of Armour (the "Subject Property"). An initial review was issued by TULLOCH to the Township on May 15, 2025.

The original Planning Justification Report, which was subject to the initial peer review, was prepared on October 3, 2024, by Leo DeLoyde, MCIP, RPP, Principal of DeLoyde Development Solutions. Since that time, a supplementary Planning Justification Report, along with responses to the peer review comments, has been submitted by Rob MacFarlane, MPL, MCIP, RPP, Senior Associate at Zelinka Priamo Ltd. TULLOCH is in receipt of the following documents:

- Supplementary Planning Justification Report prepared by Zelinka Priamo Ltd., dated July 23, 2025
- Peer Review Comment Response V2 prepared by Zelinka Priamo Ltd., dated July 24, 2025

The purpose of this letter is to review the supplementary Planning Justification Report and accompanying responses, and to advise whether TULLOCH's original peer review comments have been adequately addressed. The purpose of this review is not to dispute the professional opinion of the report's author, but to identify any potential gaps in the report and request clarification where necessary.

REVIEW COMMENTS

This section provides TULLOCH's original comments in response to the Planning Justification Report prepared by Leo DeLoyde on October 3, 2024, followed by the response from Zelinka Priamo Ltd., and an updated comment from TULLOCH indicating whether each matter has been addressed.

TULLOCH: In **Section 3.2** of DeLoyde's report, which provides Property Boundary and Site Characteristics, it is stated that:

"There is no significant tree cover on the subject lands."

RECOMMENDATION: That the author clarify the meaning of "significant tree cover" and explain the basis for concluding that no such cover exists on the subject lands.

Zelinka Priamo Ltd. Response: See Supplementary Planning Justification Report, which includes additional commentary regarding tree cover. See also Environmental Impact Study prepared by SLR Consulting.

TULLOCH Update: The Supplementary Planning Justification Report comments on tree cover, specifically in the context of wildland fire hazard. Referencing the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in the response above is appropriate. This comment can be considered addressed.

TULLOCH: In **Section 3.2**, the author also states that:

"The existing solar array is virtually invisible from either Highway 11 or Peggs Mountain Road during summer conditions."

RECOMMENDATION: That the author clarify whether the existing solar array, and by extension, the remainder of the proposed development site is visible from Highway 11 or Peggs Mountain Road during the winter months. It appears, based on Google Maps Street View, that the trees screening the site from Peggs Mountain Road are primarily deciduous. This information is important for assessing land use compatibility.

Zelinka Priamo Ltd. Response: Matters of land use compatibility, as defined by the Provincial Planning Statement, do not extend to sightlines. It is not a pre-requisite of development, nor an appropriate review criteria, for the proposed form of development to be entirely screened from public view. Rather, the Armour Official Plan permits and encourages industrial uses on Rural Community lands, and there is no policy that would require visual evaluation related to such uses. The peer-review comment is therefore unclear as to why visibility from the public road is important information to determine land use compatibility.

Nevertheless, the comment in the PJR regarding the location of the proposed facility is demonstration of the efforts of the proponent to locate the proposed BESS facility in an area that

will have minimal view from public areas, and is setback approximately 300m from the public street.

TULLOCH Update: This comment can be considered addressed.

TULLOCH: Section 5 of the report speaks to Pre-consultation and Supporting Studies. In Section 5.2, the author states that:

“No identified natural heritage or wildlife habitat features will be impacted by the development of the proposed BESS plant.”

RECOMMENDATION: That further clarification be provided to understand how the author arrived at the above conclusion. We note that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIS) was required through pre-consultation and would be the appropriate means to support such conclusion.

Zelinka Priamo Ltd. Response: See Environmental Impact Study prepared by SLR Consulting. The site has been evaluated for natural heritage and wildlife, and concludes that the development is environmentally feasible.

TULLOCH Update: This comment can be considered addressed.

TULLOCH: Section 6 of the report provides various Planning Considerations. Section 6.1 speaks to Land Use Compatibility. The author states that:

“The proposed BESS facility is situated in a rural location, adjoining an existing solar farm. We are of the opinion that the proposed BESS operation is compatible with surrounding land uses including future houses being contemplated by the landowner fronting onto Peggs Mountain Road north of the BESS.”

RECOMMENDATION: That this section be expanded to include a planning analysis to support the assertion that the proposed BESS use is compatible with surrounding land uses. Such an analysis would benefit from considering applicable policy, and guidelines, referring to technical studies and plans (e.g., noise or vibration assessments), and addressing factors such as setbacks, visual impacts and vegetative buffers, or other screening and mitigation measures.

Zelinka Priamo Ltd. Response: See Supplementary Planning Justification Report. Analysis of land use compatibility, with reference to applicable policy, and relevant technical analysis of noise and emissions related to the proposed BESS.

TULLOCH Update: This comment can be considered addressed.

TULLOCH: Section 6.2 speaks to Natural Heritage considerations, and the author states, that:

“The subject lands do not contain any identified natural heritage features or special habitat features. The proposed BESS operation is therefore acceptable from an environmental policy point of view. A Geotechnical Field Study of the new location is underway, a Phase One Environmental Site Assessment (ESA), and a Noise Study have been completed to support the BESS from an environmental standpoint. All studies confirm that the proposed BESS location is suitable for a BESS.”

RECOMMENDATION: That the analysis provided be based on an Environmental Impact Study prepared in alignment with Section 5.1.2(f) of the Official Plan (Site Assessment and/or Environmental Impact Study).

It is important to note that this recommendation does not constitute a review of the submitted Phase One ESA against O.Reg. 153/04 (the standard of a Phase One ESA). Rather, we find that this study is not appropriate for drawing conclusions regarding Natural Heritage or environmental constraints in line with applicable Provincial and Official Plan policies. Specifically, the *219 Peggs Mountain Road, Burk’s Falls, Ontario: Phase One Environmental Site Assessment* report appears to be a Phase One ESA, which differs in both objective and scope from an Environmental Impact Study (EIS).

We support TULLOCH’s environmental peer review, completed on April 28th, which may have implications for the conclusions made in DeLoyde’s Planning Justification Report.

Zelinka Priamo Ltd. Response: See Environmental Impact Study prepared by SLR Consulting. The site has been evaluated for natural heritage and wildlife, and concludes that the development is environmentally feasible .

TULLOCH Update: This comment can be considered addressed.

TULLOCH: Section 7 of the report provides the Planning Policy Framework and Analysis with Section 7.1 providing a review of Section 3.8 of the Provincial Planning Statement.

RECOMMENDATION: That the following sections of the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) be reviewed, and an analysis provided where applicable:

- Section 2.5: Rural Areas in Municipalities
- Section 2.6: Rural Lands
- Section 3.5: Land Use Compatibility
 - The analysis should include a discussion on whether the proposed use qualifies as a "major facility." If it does, the relevant policies within this section should be addressed accordingly.

- Section 4.1: Natural Heritage
- Section 5.2: Natural Hazards
 - Specifically, Section 5.2.9 should be addressed, which speaks to hazardous forest types related to wildland fire, as a portion of the site is identified with a “High” Potential Wildland Fire Hazard Classification on Official Plan Appendix A.

Zelinka Priamo Ltd. Response: See Supplementary Planning Justification Report with analysis of the identified policies.

TULLOCH Update: The identified policies are addressed in the Supplementary Planning Justification Report.

TULLOCH: Section 7.2 of the report provides a review of the Township of Armour Official Plan. The report does not clearly explain why an Official Plan Amendment is required.

RECOMMENDATION: Throughout the report, the use of the BESS facility—as commercial, industrial, or otherwise—could be better clarified. The report should explain why an Official Plan Amendment is required.

Zelinka Priamo Ltd. Response: In our opinion, no OPA is required; however, one was requested by the municipality. See Supplementary Planning Justification Report. Draft Official Plan Amendment is provided.

TULLOCH Update: This comment can be considered addressed.

TULLOCH: Section 7.2 of the report provides a main goal of the OP (Section 1.3(c)), which is to *“guide the Township toward its fullest economic potential by striving to obtain a wider commercial/industrial assessment base and to increase employment opportunities while ensuring a high level of environmental and servicing standards while ensuring that new development or redevelopment is compatible with and appropriately separated from surrounding uses;”*

The author then provides the following:

“The proposed BESS operation represents a contemporary green energy supportive land use in a relatively isolated location that is compatible with surrounding land uses.”

RECOMMENDATION: That the type of use of the BESS facility be clarified, and that a planning analysis be provided that speaks to the compatibility of the proposed use with surrounding land uses. This goal considers commercial and industrial uses in the context of assessment base and employment opportunities. However, the Planning Justification Report does not address whether the use will contribute to assessment base or

employment opportunities, which is the underlying intent of the goal. Furthermore, as noted earlier in this review, a planning analysis should be provided to justify the compatibility of the proposed use with surrounding land uses.

Zelinka Priamo Ltd. Response: See Supplementary Planning Justification Report with commentary regarding the nature of the proposed use.

TULLOCH Update: This comment can be considered addressed.

TULLOCH: Section 7.2 of the report provides Official Plan Section 3.5, which applies to Utility Corridors, and Section 3.9, which applies to Public Uses. It is our understanding that the BESS facility will be privately owned and operated.

RECOMMENDATION: That a rationale be provided for the inclusion of these sections in the analysis, to clarify its relevance to the proposal.

Zelinka Priamo Ltd. Response: See Supplementary Planning Justification report with analysis of section 3.9

TULLOCH Update: This comment can be considered addressed.

TULLOCH: In Section 7.2 the policies of Section 4.4 of the OP are provided, which pertain to Energy Conservation and Climate Change. The policies in this section are provided without any accompanying planning analysis related to the proposed development.

RECOMMENDATION: That a rationale be provided for the inclusion of this section in the analysis, to clarify its relevance to the proposal.

Zelinka Priamo Ltd. Response: See Supplementary Planning Justification report with analysis of section 4.4.

TULLOCH Update: This comment can be considered addressed.

TULLOCH: It is TULLOCH's opinion that the planning analysis should address additional sections of the Township of Armour Official Plan;

RECOMMENDATION: If applicable, a planning analysis of the following sections should be provided:

- Section 2.1.3.c – Industrial Uses

- Section 2.4 – Environmental Constraint Areas
 - 2.4.3(g) which provides policy for Wildland Fire Hazard Area, as a portion of the lands, which appears to be where the BESS is proposed, are identified as having “High” potential for wildland fire hazard as per Official Plan Appendix A.
 - Note: Additional policies within Section 2.4 may apply to the applications, depending on the findings of an Environmental Impact Study.
- Section 4.5 – Buffering Between Incompatible Uses
- Section 4.7 – Dark Sky Policy

Zelinka Priamo Ltd. Response: See Supplementary Planning Justification Report with analysis of requested policy.

TULLOCH Update: The above noted policies are addressed in the Supplementary Planning Report.

TULLOCH: Section 9.0 of the report provides the author’s conclusion and recommendation. In this Section, the author states the following:

“The proposed BESS and zoning regulations will not impinge on the landowner’s desire to make application to create additional lots on the subject lands, north of the solar array. A 150 m BESS setback from Pegg’s Mountain Road is being proposed in the Zoning By-law Amendment to ensure sufficient separation distance between existing and future rural residential lots.”

RECOMMENDATION: That the proposed setback be shown on the site plan and that additional information be provided regarding the setback. Based on the current site plan, if a 150-metre BESS setback from Pegg’s Mountain Road is implemented, the facility could potentially be situated closer to the front of the property than currently proposed (>300 m as per the submitted site plan). We note that a proposed setback from the road does not necessarily determine the separation between adjacent existing and proposed residential land uses. Further clarification is recommended regarding the rationale for this separation distance and references to conclusions and/or mitigation measures in the technical studies should be included. If this separation distance is proposed, it may be helpful for the Township if the author provides distances to each of the surrounding sensitive receptors. Further, the implementation of a separation distance should be added to Section 8.3 (Recommended Zoning Amendment).

Zelinka Priamo Ltd. Response: The Zoning By-law does not impose a separation distance for typical industrial type uses, including an aggregate pit as an example. Separation distances in the Zoning By-law are related to typical farming operations (livestock related). The results of the technical analysis (i.e. noise study and air emissions memo), do not recommend or advise on any separation distances. This peer-review comment does not appear to be based on the provided technical analysis, and no further zoning provisions are warranted at this time.

TULLOCH Update: This comment can be considered addressed.

TULLOCH: In **Section 9.0** of the report, the author also concludes that:

“We are of the opinion that the proposed BESS plant operation represents good land use planning, is in the public interest, and is fully compliant with the new Provincial Planning Statement energy planning policies.”

RECOMMENDATION: We note that the test for the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 is consistency, not compliance.

Zelinka Priamo Ltd. Response: See Supplementary Planning Justification Report with analysis of ‘consistency’ for the PPS.

TULLOCH Update: This comment can be considered addressed.

TULLOCH: The Planning Justification Report does not include a review of the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario.

RECOMMENDATION: That a planning analysis be provided to demonstrate whether the applications conform with the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario.

Zelinka Priamo Ltd. Response: See Supplementary Planning Justification Report with analysis of the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario.

TULLOCH Update: This comment can be considered addressed.

CLOSING

TULLOCH has reviewed the Supplementary Planning Justification Report, and Peer Review Comment Responses, prepared by Zelinka Priamo Ltd. It has not been the purpose of TULLOCH's review to dispute the professional opinions of the report authors. Based on the materials provided, TULLOCH confirms that a comprehensive planning analysis has been completed, all original peer review comments have been addressed, and no further clarification is requested. Please contact the undersigned should you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,

MacKenzie Van Horn

Song

Mackenzie Van Horn, MCIP, RPP
Planner | Project Manager

Sam Soja
Senior Planner | Project Manager