

**AIA FOR THE PROPOSED VIRGINIA SOLAR PARK POWER LINES BA PROJECT, LEJWELEPUTSWA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, FREE STATE PROVINCE**

Our Ref:



an agency of the  
Department of Arts and Culture

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CaseID: 17403

Date: Thursday May 11, 2023  
Page No: 1

## Letter

### In terms of Section 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999)

Attention: Neels Kruger

#### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (AIA) ON PORTIONS OF THE FARMS BLOEMHOEK 509, WELGELEGEN 382, MOOI UITZIG 352, FLORIDA 633, LE ROUX 717 AND DETENTE 744 FOR THE PROPOSED VIRGINIA SOLAR PARK POWER LINES BA PROJECT, LEJWELEPUTSWA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, FREE STATE PROVINCE**

AGES Limpopo (Pty) Ltd was appointed by Norma Energy (Pty) Ltd to undertake the Environmental Authorisation (EA) Application for the proposed new distribution powerlines (Virginia Powerlines) that consist of three 132 kV powerlines which will connect the proposed Virginia 1, 2 and 3 Solar Parks to the Eskom Theseus Main Transmission Substation (MTS) on the Farm Blomskraal 216 and Ventersburg Road, located within the Matjhabeng Local Municipality, Free State Province (2021-04-0032).

The Draft Basic Assessment Report (DBAR) was submitted in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act no. 107 of 1998) and the NEMA EIA Regulations 2014. The Eskom Theseus Main Transmission Substation (MTS) is located on Portion 6 of the Farm DOORN RIVIER 330 Theunissen RD 16 km North-East of the planned location of the Virginia 1, 2 and 3 Solar Parks. The proposed power lines will be 16.3 km for Virginia 1, 17.9 km for Virginia 2 and 19.5 km for Virginia 3, all of which will fall within a 500 m wide powerline corridor.

Exigo Sustainability, Prof Bruce Rubidge and Dr Marc Van den Brandt were appointed to provide heritage specialist input as part of the EA application as required by section 24(4)(iii) of NEMA and section 38(3) and 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act, Act 25 of 1999 (NHRA).

*Rubidge, B and Van den Brandt, M. 2021. Palaeontological Impact Assessment (PIA) Blomskraal 216, Lejweleputswa District Municipality, Free State Province (Virginia 1, Virginia 2, Virginia 3 Solar Parks, and Power Line Corridor)*

The development area is underlain by Late Permian deposits of the Adelaide Subgroup of the Lower Beaufort Group and overlain mostly by Quaternary alluvial deposits, and Jurassic dolerite intrusions. Outcroppings of the Beaufort Group and Quaternary alluvial deposits did not reveal any fossils and it is therefore



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recommended from a palaeontological perspective, that the proposed development should proceed. A Chance Find protocol is attached to be applied if fossils are exposed in the process of development.

### Recommendations

- The proposed development must be constrained to the irrigated cropland that covers most of the study area, currently carrying maize/corn, overlying the mapped Quaternary alluvial deposits and the non-irrigated naturally vegetated grassland, surrounding the Merriespruit River centrally, the Steenbokspruit River in the east, and the grassland immediately West of the R73.
- No go areas due to palaeontological sensitivity includes the Merriespruit River, the river edges of exposed alluvium and isolated scattered sandstone boulders nearby and the Steenbokspruit River and its three erosional gullies or tributary streams.

*Kruger, N. 2021. Ages Limpopo: Proposed Virginia Solar Parks Power Lines BA Project, Lejweleputswa District Municipality, Free State Province Archaeological Impact Assessment*

The study area has been disturbed by previous agricultural activities and one Historical Period Site (Exigo-VSPL-HP01) which is of medium-low significance and a Contemporary Period Features (Exigo-VSP-CP01) of no heritage significance were identified on the site.

### Recommendations

- A destruction permit must be obtained from the relevant Heritage Resources Authorities should the site Exigo-VSPL-HP01, or parts thereof be impacted on by the construction of monopoles, pylons or other infrastructure. Should the site be retained, it is advisable to observe a 20m conservation buffer around the site. Generally, the sites should be monitored by an informed ECO in order to avoid the destruction of previously undetected heritage remains and potential human burials which might occur at the site.
- Considering the localised nature of heritage remains, the general monitoring of the development progress by an ECO or by the heritage specialist is recommended for all stages of the project. Should any subsurface palaeontological, archaeological or historical material, or burials be exposed during construction activities, all activities should be suspended and the archaeological specialist should be notified immediately.
- It should be stated that it is likely that further undetected archaeological remains might occur elsewhere in the Study Area along water sources and drainage lines, fountains and pans would often have

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attracted human activity in the past. Also, since Stone Age material seems to originate from below present soil surfaces in eroded areas, the larger landscape should be regarded as potentially sensitive in terms of possible subsurface deposits. Burials and historically significant structures dating to the Colonial Period occur on farms in the area and these resources should be avoided during all phases of construction and development, including the operational phases of the development.

- As Palaeontological remains occur where bedrock has been exposed, all geological features should be regarded as sensitive.
- Water sources such as drainage lines, fountains and pans would often have attracted human activity in the past. As Stone Age material occur in the larger landscape, such resources should be regarded as potentially sensitive in terms of possible subsurface deposits.

SAHRA requested a notification regarding the decision of the EA. The EA was granted on the 21/05/2022, and the EA document was uploaded to the case application on the 10/05/2023.

Should you have any further queries, please contact the designated official using the case number quoted above in the case header.

Yours faithfully

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Sityhilelo Ngcatsha  
Archaeology, Palaeontology, Meteorite Assistant  
South African Heritage Resources Agency

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Phillip Hine

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Manager: Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites Unit  
South African Heritage Resources Agency

**ADMIN:**

Direct URL to case: <https://sahris.sahra.org.za/node/587813>

**Terms & Conditions:**

1. This approval does not exonerate the applicant from obtaining local authority approval or any other necessary approval for proposed work.
2. If any heritage resources, including graves or human remains, are encountered they must be reported to SAHRA immediately.
3. SAHRA reserves the right to request additional information as required.