

279 Hinman Road  
Watertown, CT 06795

July 30, 2020

State of Connecticut Siting Council  
Ten Franklin Square  
New Britain, CT 067051

Subject: Watertown Solar One Petition No. 1417 - Hodge Complaint

Dear Council Members:

Please consider this letter as complaint to the petition of Watertown Solar One. LLC and VCP, LLC d/b/a Verogy.

I purchased the home at 279 Hinman Road, Watertown, CT 06795 on June 2019. Previous to the purchase of the property, I was never informed of the proposed Watertown Solar One solar power plant installation. I only learned of this petition via certified letter on July 2, 2020 from the office of Robinson & Cole, Kenneth C. Baldwin, Esq.

Following the receipt of the certified letter, I emailed Attorney Baldwin's office requesting information of how and when this petition was communicated to Watertown residents last year. I requested that he forward my inquiry to the Watertown Solar One, Project Manager, Mr. Bryan Fitzgerald. To date, I have not received any response.

My family has grave concerns and complaints about Watertown Solar One proposal as follows:

1. My house at 279 Hinman Road, Watertown, CT is located approximately 2500 feet away from the proposed 1.975 Megawatt solar generating station. The property is elevated high above the proposed parcels and during the winter months the 16 acre to 154 acre solar panel farm will become a highly visible eyesore. This will severely detract from the backyard and side house views. Attorney Baldwin shared that there will remain a tree line however, my concern is that the trees will not be effective to mask the solar farm from our view since our property sits at a higher elevation especially during the winter months.

Watertown's Judson School is also concerned with aesthetics resolution. In addition, Judge James Abrams recently ruled a temporary injunction for the Southington Solar One project and will continue with scheduled hearings for Aug. 17 and Aug. 31 to discuss issues raised by neighbors who are trying to stop the project.

It's commonly known that most prospective home buyers evaluate abutting properties and shy away from power plants, industrial businesses, et al. This power plant installation will devalue my property.

2. Project Scope:

Plant Growth Watertown Solar One is introducing this project with a 1.975 Megawatt (MW) AC solar generating facility. Since it is expected to span approx. 154 acres, Watertown residents need to be made aware of the increased maximum megawattage as the solar farm phases.

Watertown Solar One used the most expedient way to request petition approval by requesting under 2.0 megawattage threshold. By only specifying under 2.0 megawattage it significantly decreases the amount of required permits. Later as the power plant expands the transformer power megawattage increases accordingly. The Watertown abutters need to understand the scope and how the power specifications will change accordingly.

3. Health/Safety:

(Health and Safety Impacts of Solar Photovoltaics By Tommy Cleveland May 2017). The concern that does exist is for long-term exposure above 0.4  $\mu\text{T}$  (4 mG) that may have some connection to increased cases of childhood leukemia. Since the 1970s, some have expressed concern over potential health consequences of EMF from electricity a slight increase in childhood leukemia associated with average exposure to residential power-frequency magnetic fields above 0.3 to 0.4  $\mu\text{T}$  (microteslas) (equal to 3.0 to 4.0 mG (milligauss) World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) to classify ELF magnetic fields as "possibly carcinogenic to humans".

My family has great concern about health and safety impacts. My daughter plans to raise her children in this house and we have great concern for my future grandchildren.

We also have great concerns about a family friend visiting with an implanted medical device if this solar plant. There is concern that there is potential for a solar project to interfere with the operation her device. There are inconclusive scientific studies on the effect of medical devices relative to EMF.

Since we are greatly concerned with the unknown/unforeseen health risks we plan to hire a monitoring service to provide monthly statistical reporting should this project be approved.

4. Noise:

In my phone conversation with Attorney Kenneth C. Baldwin I asked if there will be audible noise. He replied that there will be industrial related noise during operating hours. Personally, we moved to the country to enjoy the beauty and quiet of nature. We didn't imagine that we would be confronted with industrial related noises at our dream home.

5. Wildlife:

We have an abundance of wildlife here and this solar farm can pose real environmental risk to wildlife habitation. We have bird houses and nests all over the property and fear that life will change for these animals due to tree removals.

Glare: There is concern that the multiple rows of solar panels may be capable of producing a massive glare that is offensive to those living in its path including wildlife (e.g., birds soaring above). There are numerous species of wildlife animals in this area.

Wildlife Habits: Sadly, since wildlife needs to be restricted from solar farm property, it will lose access to approximately 154 acres which will significantly impact their nesting, mating, and living habits.

6. Environment:

Sudden erosion can have a deleterious effect on a PV plant. This can result in loss of topsoil can lead and reshaping of ground topography. This erosion can result in a creation of channels, holes, slopes and channels on the ground. This can cause shift affecting of the photovoltaic panels. In addition, this can lead to flooding. Solar farms can inhibit local vegetation growth and damage agriculture and prevent the land from begin occupied with lifeforms.

Most importantly, when the solar construction site goes into operation, earth movements may occur as the ground stabilizes. This can result in broken conduits and cables. This can cause fire and personal hazards.

Cleaning fluids for the photovoltaic panels consist of harmful chemicals and harsh to the environment.

7. Water Flow/Restriction:

This plant is proposed in an area that has natural waterflows and streams. In time the installation could pose an environmental issue and reroute water flow. The stream that feeds into the waterflow flows directly down through our property.

8. Road traffic:

Road traffic will increase due to the solar station installation of access ways.

9. Transformer Leakage:

A transformer leak can possibly cause land contamination and other safety risks. While it is expected that the Watertown Solar One will be regulated to adhere to the strictest safety and operational maintenance federal/state regulations, there is a possible risk for transformer leakage.

10. Possible Arc Flash:

Another electrical hazard is an arc flash, which is an explosion of energy that can occur in a short circuit situation. This explosive release of energy causes a flash of heat and a shockwave, both of which can cause serious injury or death.

11. Inverter: Inverter failures/damages account for approximately 80% of PV system downtime.

In summary, respectfully, we ask that the CT Siting Council evaluate our family's concerns. I purchased this property and absolutely loved the beautiful country setting since I grew up on a farm. We never expected to worry about uncertainty about future health risk to grandchildren, devaluation of property, aesthetics, industrial noise and wildlife impacts. This petition is proposing a massive environmental change to the agricultural areas located at Hinman and Pratt encompassing up to 154 acres.

As earlier stated, we had no knowledge of this petition until July 2, 2020 and are still trying to understand how a project of this magnitude was not communicated via a Watertown town hearings so that all could understand scope and possible future impact.

We implore the Council to consider our perspective and perhaps think about this installation in your own backyards. While the concept of green energy is appealing to most, including myself, it is not my belief that agricultural lands/wildlife should be violated for this purpose.

Kind Regards,

Renee Hodge  
279 Hinman Road  
Watertown, CT 06795

Email: [renehodge909@gmail.com](mailto:renehodge909@gmail.com)