



STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Office of the Commissioner



Bryan P. Hurlburt
Commissioner

860-713-2501
www.CTGrown.gov

August 17, 2020

Melanie A. Bachman
Executive Director
Connecticut Siting Council
10 Franklin Square
New Britain, CT 06051

Re: Verogy - Bristol Solar One, LLC, proposed 3.25 Megawatt AC solar project to be located at Minors Farm, 399 Hill St., Bristol

Dear Executive Director Bachman:

Pursuant to 16-50k(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes, we have reviewed the above cited project (as described in correspondence to the Department of Agriculture dated April 27, 2020, with respect to agricultural impacts.

The project site is approximately 28 acres, of which the solar project foot print is planned to contain approximately 10 acres of mapped prime farmland. The developers (Verogy) have stated that they intend to develop this project with a co-use of rotational sheep grazing on the site.

Through correspondence to the Department of Agriculture, dated July 20, 2020 (attached), Verogy has represented the following to the Department concerning their co-use plan:

- 1) Verogy will be contracting with Agrivoltaic Solutions LLC (AVS) to provide a flock of sheep to graze at Verogy's solar facility, and that the site will be stocked with sheep at a density determined by AVS to adequately manage the vegetative growth of grasses and forbs within the perimeter fence at the site;
- 2) The sheep flock will be delivered to the site during April/May 2021, after the project has completed construction. The exact date will be determined depending on site specific forage quantity and weather conditions. The site will be rotationally grazed with sheep until the conclusion of the growing season in the fall of 2021, estimated by the developers to be November 2021;
- 3) Verogy has also stated that the sheep will be managed and cared for, and stocking rate adjusted as necessary throughout the season by trained professionals. One of the farmers that Verogy is planning on working with (through AVS) is Joseph Cohen of East Windsor; and

- 4) Verogy intends to use a “combination” seed mix that will combine grasses and forbs that will address the nutritional needs of the sheep while also providing nectar for native pollinator species. The exact selection of the seed mix will be determined after Verogy consults with AVS concerning this issue.

I want to stress to the Siting Council there are certainly other considerations in a co-use such as this one which includes livestock. For example, developers, in partnership with the farmer, will need to consider how sheep will coexist with the solar panels, the site fencing, cable trays, etc. The developers will also be expected to provide the necessary infrastructure to accommodate housing, feeding, watering to support general herd management practices. Developers need to ensure there is an adequate plan for care and management of the sheep and training for anyone working at the site to ensure that both worker and animal welfare is effectively managed. It will also be necessary to ensure there is adequate signage/security in and around the site noting that live animals are grazing on the property.

Presently, the logistics and stipulations surrounding this project enable the agency to support this incorporation of agricultural co-use. Further, because successful implementation of this proposed co-use will keep production agriculture activities throughout this site, the Department of Agriculture can conclude that there does not appear to be a material impact on the status of prime farmland. The Department of Agriculture retains the ability to raise concerns and opposition in the future as detailed plans are provided by the developers.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact either myself or Stephen Anderson of my staff. Steve can be reached at stephen.anderson@ct.gov, or at (860) 713-2592.

Sincerely,



Bryan P. Hurlburt
Commissioner

Cc: Katie Dykes, Commissioner, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
Lee Hoffman, Pullman & Comley LLC