



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Keith Ainsworth
Acting Chair

Alicea Charamut

Christopher Donnelly

David Kalafa

Kip Kolesinskas

Matthew Reiser

Denise Rodosevich

Charles Vidich

William Warzecha

Paul Aresta
Executive Director

July 26, 2023

Melanie Bachman, Executive Director
Connecticut Siting Council
Ten Franklin Square
New Britain, CT 06051

PETITION NO. 1583 – TRITEC Americas, LLC (Petitioner) notice of election to waive exclusion from Connecticut Siting Council jurisdiction, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §16-50k(e), and petition for a declaratory ruling for the proposed construction, maintenance and operation of a 0.999-megawatt AC solar photovoltaic electric generating facility located at Parcel Nos. 113-1 and 113-1-A, 428 Bethmour Road, Bethany, Connecticut, and associated electrical interconnection.

Dear Attorney Bachman,

The Council on Environmental Quality (Council) supports the development of clean, renewable energy technologies on appropriate sites in Connecticut. The Council offers the following comments regarding Petition 1583.

1. Visibility

The Petitioner notes that vegetation buffers, consisting of evergreen species, are proposed along the north, west and south portions of the property to shield the proposed solar photovoltaic array from neighboring properties. The Council supports efforts to minimize the potential visual impact of the proposed facility from the neighboring properties and recommends that the proposed evergreen plants consist of native, deer-resistant species that would be of sufficient size to effectively screen the proposed facility.

2. Water Resources

The Petitioner notes that the project falls within an area classified by 'GA' groundwater quality and that a drinking water watershed is located immediately northwest of the proposed project. The Petitioner also notes that the area contains a mix of residential neighborhoods and small agricultural plots that might utilize private wells. In addition, a wetland and watercourse system are located approximately 100 feet from the northeastern corner of the proposed project area. The Council recommends that the Petitioner develop and implement a Spill Prevention Plan to protect water resources, including but not be limited to: 1) restricting the servicing of construction vehicles and equipment on the proposed site, 2) restricting the refueling of construction vehicles and machinery near the wetlands and requiring that refueling of construction vehicles and machinery is done on an impervious surface with secondary containment in other areas, 3) restricting the storage of fuel and other hazardous materials on the proposed site, 4) ensuring that the use of any herbicides is strictly controlled and applied by a state-licensed pesticide/herbicide applicator, and 5) providing a fuel spill remediation kit(s) onsite for construction contractors and training the contractors on its proper use.

3. Prime Farmland Soils and Agricultural Uses

The Council notes that portions of the proposed site, including some of the areas proposed for

the installation of solar panels, are underlain by prime farmland soils. While the proposed project is exempt from the requirement to secure a determination from the Connecticut Department of Agriculture that the proposed solar project would not materially affect the status of prime farmland soils, the proposed project could impact the prime farmland soils and future agricultural uses. Consequently, the Council recommends that best practices be employed during construction that might allow for the future restoration of farmland soils to more productive agricultural use by retaining the topsoil on the proposed site and minimizing grading, trenching, and compaction of farmland soils.

The Council's comments above address only certain elements of the materials provided by the Petitioner at the time of the filing. Additional information can become evident through comments offered by other parties and during the Siting Council's administrative hearing process. The absence of comment(s) by this Council about any Petition or Application, or any aspects thereof, may not be interpreted as an endorsement of a proposed project, or its components or that this Council might not have comments or concerns on more specific issues raised during the hearing process.

Thank you for your consideration of the Council's comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Aresta". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Paul Aresta
Executive Director