



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

January 24, 2024

Melanie Bachman, Executive Director
Connecticut Siting Council
Ten Franklin Square
New Britain, CT 06051
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PETITION NO. 1602 – Glastonbury Solar One, LLC and VCP, LLC d/b/a Verogy, LLC (Petitioner) petition for a declaratory ruling, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §4-176 and §16-50k, for the proposed construction, maintenance and operation of a 3.0-megawatt AC solar photovoltaic electric generating facility located at 17 Wickham Road, Glastonbury, Connecticut, and associated electrical interconnection.

Dear Attorney Bachman,

The Council on Environmental Quality (Council) offers the following comments regarding Petition 1602.

1. Wildlife

The Petitioner notes that the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) Wildlife Division issued a Determination dated October 6, 2023, that indicated that extant populations of one state listed Species of Special Concern: eastern box turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*) might be in/near the proposed project area. Further, DEEP recommended protection strategies for the eastern box turtle during construction and operation of the proposed facility. The Petition states that it “has incorporated these conservation measures into the site development plan”; however, neither the notes on Site Plans C-1.0 or C 4-0 include information on the protective measures identified in DEEP’s letter. The Council recommends that the Petitioner a) develop, in consultation with DEEP and/or a qualified herpetologist, and implement a protection plan for eastern box turtle, which should include, but not limited to the protective measures identified in DEEP’s letter of October 6, 2023, and that b) the “CTDEEP-Approved Qualified Inspector” ensure conformance with the protection plan.

2. Erosion & Sedimentation (E&S) Controls

The Petitioner notes that “initial work would involve the installation of erosion and sediment control measures”, consistent with the 2002 Connecticut Guidelines for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control, as amended. The Council supports efforts to minimize the impact of erosion and sedimentation and recommends that the Petitioner consider utilizing updated methods and techniques for minimizing erosion and sedimentation based on the best currently available technology and strategies, as identified in the revised Connecticut Guidelines for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control, which has an effective date of March 30, 2024, as appropriate. The Council notes that certain E&S control products have been found to entangle wildlife, including reptiles, amphibians, birds and small mammals. Given the potential presence of eastern box turtle in the project area, the Council recommends that the Petitioner avoid/minimize the use of E&S control measures that are made of plastic and/or have the potential for wildlife entanglement.

Keith Ainsworth
Acting Chair

Christopher Donnelly

David Kalafa

Matthew Reiser

Denise Rodosevich

Charles Vidich

William Warzecha

Paul Aresta
Executive Director

3. Farmland

The Petitioner notes that the Project Site is an active farm and the Connecticut Department of Agriculture (DOAg) notes that the proposed project area is underlain primarily with prime farmland soils and some statewide important farmland soils. Although the DOAg issued a conditional determination that the proposed project “will not materially affect the status of project land as prime farmland” (letter dated December 7, 2023), the Council wants to emphasize the importance of agricultural land in Connecticut and to note that the continuing accretion of multiple individual decisions to site solar facilities on productive agricultural land has cumulative regional economic and ecological implications. The DOAg’s determination is based, in part, on the proposed use of sheep grazing and adherence to the “Requirements for Solar Grazing Properties”. The Council questions if there are sufficient quantities of sheep to ensure the proposed co-use for the operating life of the proposed facility, which the Petitioner notes is 35 years, as well as other solar facilities throughout the state that will be using sheep. The Council recommends that the Petitioner employ best practices during construction and operation that might allow for the future restoration of farmland soils to a more productive agricultural state by minimizing grading, trenching, and compaction of farmland soils.

4. Spill Prevention and Materials Storage Plan

The Petitioner submitted a Spill Prevention and Materials Storage Plan (Appendix L) and has stated that “this Spill Prevention and Materials Storage Plan was developed for the construction of a 3.0 MW ground mounted solar array located at 445 River Street, in Windsor, Connecticut.” The Council supports efforts to eliminate or mitigate potential adverse impacts associated with accidental releases/spills. The Council questions if the submitted Spill Prevention and Materials Storage Plan would also be applicable to the proposed project site, and if so, the Council recommends that the “Site and Emergency Contact Information” be updated, as appropriate.

The Council’s comments above addresses 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.

Paul Aresta
Executive Director