

**Petition 1056**  
**GRE 314 East Lyme, LLC**  
**Antares Solar Field, East Lyme**

**Development and Management Plan – Site Clearing**  
**August 22, 2013**

On May 16, 2013, the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) issued a Declaratory Ruling to GRE 314 East Lyme, LLC (GRE) that no Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need is required for the construction, maintenance, and operation of a 5.0 Megawatt Solar Photovoltaic Project located Grassy Hill Road and Walnut Hill Road in East Lyme, Connecticut. As required in the Council's Decision and Order, GRE submitted a Development and Management Plan for this project on August 1, 2013. The D&M included site drawings, project narrative, and Stormwater Management Plan. Initial staff review of the D&M submittal required interrogatories to be filed with GRE. Responses were received on August 15, 2013.

GRE intends to start site clearing as soon as possible. Site clearing would involve the removal of approximately 15-acres of woodland and several abandoned buildings on the eastern portion of the project area (Ader Parcel).

A Bat Study was performed by Northeast Ecological Services (NEES) in April 2013 for the project. The study characterized the wooded area as early to mid-successional forest with a low snag density, and thus concluded this area would not be a primary roosting area for forest-roosting bats. Nevertheless, the study recommended that clearing be limited to winter months. Additionally, the study recommended a survey be conducted of the abandoned buildings scheduled for demolition to determine if bat maternity colonies have been established in them

NEES also consulted with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). According to NEES, DEEP had no concerns regarding the projects potential impact on the local bat population, including the Federally-endangered Indiana Bat, a species not likely to occur in eastern Connecticut.

On April 10, 2013, GRE submitted an archeological survey that indicated the project area was heavily disturbed by past use and no further impacts to archeological or historical objects or sites would be likely.

With its interrogatory responses regarding the D&M Plan, GRE submitted revised drawings that indicate construction and project operation access will be from the existing driveway at 40 Grassy Hill Road, as required by the Council's Decision and Order. The original D&M drawing erroneously depicted construction access from Walnut Hill Road.

Staff recommends approval of the land clearing portion of the project with the condition that GRE retain an environment consultant to inspect the old barn and the abandoned house on the property prior to demolition to determine if they host any bat maternity colonies. If a bat colony is found, GRE shall consult with DEEP for guidance and notify the Council of DEEP's recommendation.