



Connecticut Department of
**ENERGY &
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION**

April 4, 2013

Fred Riese
DEEP Environmental Review
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06103

Re: Walnut Hill Solar Farm in East Lyme, Connecticut

Materials pertaining to the above project were forwarded to me for review by the DEEP Natural Diversity Database (NDDDB). Their records indicate that the federal and state endangered American chaffseed (*Schwalbea americana*) and state species of special concern Henry's elfin butterfly (*Collophrys henrici*) occur in the vicinity of this project.

Based on the information and materials provided by EPS dated 12/11/12, we do not have concerns regarding impacts to American chaffseed (*Schwalbea americana*). Should you have additional questions about American chaffseed, please contact Nelson DeBarros (nelson.debarros@ct.gov).

While Henry's elfin utilizes glossy buckthorn (*Frangula*) as discussed in the report and noted in the initial review by DEEP, it also has been documented to use blueberry (*Vaccinium*) and other plant groups throughout its range. *Frangula* was not found on-site. Though blueberry was documented in the wooded wetland areas of the property, all activity associated with the construction and operation of the solar farm is stated to occur outside of wetlands and watercourses. If the butterfly is utilizing blueberry as a larval food source in this area, it would not be impacted. Therefore, I concur with EPS that there will be limited impacts to Henry's elfin from this project.

Additionally, maintaining *Vaccinium* species wherever possible on-site may be beneficial to Henry's elfin as well as other wildlife species.

Natural Diversity Database information includes all information regarding critical biological resources available to us at the time of the request. This information is a compilation of data collected over the years by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's Natural History Survey and cooperating units of DEEP, private conservation groups and the scientific community. This information is not necessarily the result of comprehensive or site-specific field investigations. Consultations with the Database should not be substituted for on-site surveys required for environmental assessments. Current research projects and new contributors continue to identify additional populations of species and locations of habitats of concern, as well as, enhance existing data. Such new information is incorporated into the Database as it becomes available.

This is a preliminary site review and is not a final determination. A more detailed review may be conducted as part of any subsequent environmental permit applications submitted to the DEEP for the proposed site. Please be advised that should state permits be required or should state involvement occur in some other fashion, specific restrictions or conditions relating to the species discussed above may apply. In this situation, additional evaluation of the proposal by the DEEP Wildlife Division should be requested and species-specific surveys may be required. If the proposed project has not been initiated within one year of this Wildlife Division review, you should contact the NDDDB for an updated review.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me at Laura.Saucier@ct.gov, please reference the NDDB number at the bottom of this letter when you e-mail or write. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Laura Saucier". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Laura Saucier
Wildlife Technician

cc. N. DeBarros-DEEP

NDDB201202394