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April 16, 2021

(Melanie.bachman@ct.gov) and (Siting.council@ct.gov)

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

Re: Docket No. 1424, Petition of Southington Solar One, LLC (1012 East Street, Southington, Connecticut)

Dear Attorney Bachman,

The Intervenors in the above matter, Michael and Diane Karabin, respectfully request that the Connecticut Siting Council hold a public hearing on Petition No. 1424 which has significant long-term consequences. They recognize a public hearing is not required, but feel the Council would benefit from hearing from concerned state and Southington citizens (including farmers) and/or Town officials prior to issuing a decision.

The Department of Agriculture (“DOA”) in its September 16, 2020 submission in this matter addressed the loss of 30 acres of prime farmland and concluded it “cannot make a determination to the Connecticut Siting Council that this project will not have a material effect on the status of prime farmland.” That Prime Farmland Determination Letter was consistent with the Council on Environmental Quality’s, August 22, 2020 submission stating that “the relocation of ancillary agricultural activity at solar energy sites is not a remedy for the loss of prime farmland that the legislature intended to be preserved when it enacted PA17-218.”

By letter dated February 19, 2021 the DOA reversed its position and issued a No Material Impact to Prime Farmland Determination Letter. This was based on certain newly proposed conditions, one Petitioner’s commitment to work to implement a community garden on the site with the Town of Southington, and another the landowner agreeing to negotiate in good faith to sell the development rights (60 acres of the land are farmland, and the proposal covers (solar site) approximately 40 acres of the farmland, see Petition- pages 5, 9, and 21). Aerial photo (5/27/20) of farmland attached.

In response to Interrogatory 70(a), (referencing an Exhibit B), the newly proposed community garden would be 20,000 square feet, less than half an acre. There is no formal agreement with the Town, let alone one that addresses the issues/questions set forth in Interrogatories 70(a)-(k) (i.e., liability, maintenance, decommissioning, security) and Interrogatory 73d (no water source, talks about a possible future connection

to existing Southington Water Department lines several hundred feet away on East Street, no timeframe or cost set forth).

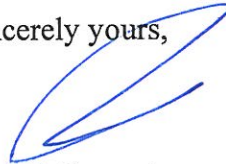
Are the newly proposed conditions desired or even wanted, and do they have any meaningful impact on the removal of approximately 40 acres of farmland, 26.6 acres of which is designated as prime farmland soils (Petition p.27)?

The Town of Southington's Planning and Zoning Commission in its August 27, 2020 submission to the Council made its position clear regarding the loss of farmland, stating:

"The Town would ideally prefer Southington Solar One to pursue an alternate location for this project most notably not on the limited usable precious farmland that is left in Southington. The Town of Southington, through their Farm Heritage Committee, Open Space Committee and Planning & Zoning Commission have made farmland preservation a strategic priority in the Town's current plan of conservation and development. The solar installation will take prime farming acreage out of agriculture for decades with no surety that the land will return to that capacity in the future."

A public hearing on the Petition would provide an opportunity for concerned Southington citizens and town officials (and the farm community) to have a voice and speak on this revised proposal which in many ways is long on possibilities but short on specifics.

Sincerely yours,



Paul E. Zagorsky

PEZ/cd


CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that on this 16th day of April, 2021, the foregoing was delivered by electronic mail, in accordance with §16-50j-12 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, to the following parties of record:

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