

Ms. Melanie A. Bachman
Executive Director/Staff Attorney
State of CT Siting Council

Re: Petition No. 1425 – Gaylord Mountain Solar Project 2019 LLC

January 31, 2021

Dear Ms. Bachman,

I respectfully request that you do not move forward with siting approval for **PETITION NO. 1425** – Gaylord Mountain Solar Project 2019 LLC.

This project is in direct opposition to the recommendations of the [Connecticut Governor's Council on Climate Change, \(GC3\) Report of January 2021](#). According to the report, forests are a key component of our state's efforts to mitigate climate change through sequestration and storage of Carbon. [The Forest's Sub-Group Final Report](#) states: "Explore option of statewide "no-net-loss of forest" policy, which includes "avoiding forest conversion" and "Increase adaptation and resilience of Connecticut's forests through keeping forests as forests and supported actions to maintain un-fragmented forests."

The report recognizes the connections between waterways, wetlands, core forests, and wildlife habitat, noting our state's commitment to The Coalition of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers on [Resolution 40-3, Resolution on Ecological Connectivity, Adaptation to Climate Change, and Biodiversity Conservation](#). As our climate becomes warmer, species need to adapt and move in order to survive. DEEP's own [Forestland Impact Map](#) reveals the Gaylord Mountain Site to be centered between two core forest areas, making it crucial to wildlife movement and adaptation.

President Biden's recently signed an executive order to protect 30% of our lands and ocean. This will stave off climate change and protect the biodiversity which balances life on this planet. CT can help this effort by not clearcutting mature forest. The Arbor Day Foundation estimates that one acre of forest absorbs 6 tons of Carbon Dioxide and releases 4 tons of Oxygen.

Mature Red and White Oak, Hickory, Beech, and Birch trees forest this area, each with their accompanying species and understory of flora and fauna, including wetlands. Oak trees, a keystone species of some concern themselves, are noted to support thousands of different species of insects and animals, more than any other tree. The project's Environmental Impact statement

(EIS), has not examined or documented the nature of species and wildlife on the site fully. This should also be done before the project is approved.

Solar is indeed taking its place in CT's clean energy landscape, and I look forward to its widespread adoption; hoping that solar's short life span (20 years) and end of life waste products and cleanup will be dealt with in the coming decade. This project should go forward, but I would encourage the petitioner to find a less fragile site.

There is a mantra among naturalists, "Right Tree Right Place." The same should apply to solar installations.

Thank you.

Shawn O'Sullivan
Fairfield, CT