



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
*CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL*

Ten Franklin Square, New Britain, CT 06051

Phone: (860) 827-2935 Fax: (860) 827-2950

E-Mail: [siting.council@ct.gov](mailto:siting.council@ct.gov)

Web Site: [portal.ct.gov/csc](http://portal.ct.gov/csc)

**VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL**

March 6, 2023

TO: Service List, dated January 31, 2023

FROM: Melanie Bachman, Executive Director *MB*

RE: **PETITION NO. 1558** – Community Power Group LLC petition for a declaratory ruling, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §4-176 and §16-50k, for the proposed construction, maintenance and operation of a 4-megawatt AC solar photovoltaic electric generating facility located at 24 Middle Road, Ellington, Connecticut, and associated electrical interconnection.

---

Comments have been received from the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection on March 3, 2023. A copy of the comments is attached for your review.

MB/RDM/laf

c: Council Members



March 3, 2023

Connecticut Siting Council  
10 Franklin Square  
New Britain, Connecticut 06051

RE: 4-MW Photovoltaic Generating Facility  
Community Power Group  
Ellington, Connecticut  
Petition No. 1558

Dear Members of the Connecticut Siting Council:

Staff of this department have reviewed the above-referenced Petition for Declaratory Ruling that no Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need will be required for the construction of a 4.0-MW photovoltaic generating facility 24 Middle Road in Ellington. In addition, a field review of the site was conducted on February 16, 2023. Based on these efforts, the following comments are offered to the Council for your consideration in this proceeding.

DEEP notes that the construction of facilities such as that proposed in this petition will aid in the achievement of Connecticut's vision for a more affordable, cleaner, and more reliable energy future for the ratepayers of Connecticut. Bringing more zero carbon energy projects on line is instrumental in furthering this vision as these resources help diversify the regional fuel mix, and they aid in achieving a 100% zero-carbon electric sector by 2040 as required by Connecticut General Statutes Sec. 22a-200a(a)(3). Developing grid-scale renewables is also imperative to the state's success in achieving its statutory goal of reducing carbon emissions generally by 45% below 2001 levels by 2030 and by 80% below 2001 levels by 2050.

#### Site Description

The entire project site is currently a cornfield. A subtle north-south topographic ridge pretty evenly bisects the site. The southwestern corner of the site evidences deposition of soils washed down from the western half of the cornfield. There are two access drives into the site, one at 24 Middle Road and one at 34 Middle Road. A small area of erosion is seen along the northern edge of the cornfield just west of the 34 Middle Road access drive. Footing on much of the site could be characterized as muddy. Slopes across the site are gentle. Small watercourses run north to south just east and west of the edges of the cornfield.

Visibility of the solar farm will range from potentially very significant to more muted for proximal homes along Middle Road and the western end of Heather Road just east of the site. The two homes at 25 and 27 Middle Road, on the northern side of that road and across from the main access drive, will have unscreened views of the facility. The two westernmost homes on Heather Road, east of the site, are partially screened by deciduous trees but will see the eastward sloping eastern half of the solar farm clearly at non-foliage times of the year. The three homes at 36, 38, and 40 Middle Road, west of the western access drive, are seen clearly from the site through fifty

yards of deciduous woods. The homes at 28 and 32 Middle Road will also see the facility with the 28 Middle Road being the most impacted of any residence, as it abuts the proposed site on two sides and with only some on-site landscaping in the yard providing partial visual screening. The homeowner at this site said he is not opposed to the idea of a solar farm but would definitely expect some landscaping to block the views of it, which will be at very close range from this home.

### Construction Stormwater Management

Construction projects involving five or more acres of land disturbance, including this one, either require an individual NPDES discharge permit from DEEP or may register for coverage under DEEP's General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater and Dewatering Wastewaters from Construction Activities (DEEP-WPED-GP-015). As of March 2, we have no record that Community Power Group has submitted a registration under the General Permit.

### Miscellaneous Petition Commentary

Regarding the proposed agricultural co-use measures at the site, a couple observations seem appropriate. First, given the proposed use of sheep to control vegetation within the perimeter fence, that fencing needs to be robust enough to prevent coyote intrusions, such as those at Verogy's Southington Solar One facility. Even if interior paddocks are being set up, the perimeter fence should be strong enough to prevent coyotes from gaining access to the project site. Because of the proposed use of sheep at the site, it is also appropriate to forego the standard 6" access gap for wildlife below the fence and instead anchor the fence as firmly as possible into the ground. Also noted was the presence of two apiaries on the property immediately to the south, immediately south of the 4-acre cornfield proposed for contract gardening in the southeastern corner of the property, which may compete with the proposed beekeepers research proposal at the project site.

Lastly, relevant to the effectiveness of vegetative screening measures at the site, such plantings require follow-up maintenance, e.g., watering, after completion of the project. It is likely that this maintenance did not occur just down Middle Road at the Petition No. 1426 East Windsor Solar One site where a significant majority of the arbor vitae planted along Middle Road in East Windsor to screen residences north of the site from views of that facility are now dead. The Council should consider a requirement to replace any dead landscape plantings for perhaps a five-year period after project completion. Such plantings also help to screen out inverter noise from nearby residences.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this petition and to submit these comments to the Council. Should you, other Council members or Council staff have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (860) 424-4110 or at [frederick.riese@ct.gov](mailto:frederick.riese@ct.gov).

Respectfully yours,



Frederick L. Riese

Senior Environmental Analyst

CC: Katie Dykes, Commissioner