



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL

Ten Franklin Square, New Britain, CT 06051

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May 25, 2023

Dawn Dolloff
8 Wolfersdorf Road
East Windsor, CT 06106

RE: **PETITION NO. 1572** – East Windsor Solar Two, 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 4.0-megawatt AC solar photovoltaic electric generating facility located at 31 Thrall Road, East Windsor, Connecticut, and associated electrical interconnection.

Dear Dawn Dolloff:

The Connecticut Siting Council (Council) is in receipt of your Request for a Public Hearing, dated May 17, 2023, for the above-referenced petition.

The Request for a Public Hearing will be placed on the next Council meeting agenda, a copy of which will be sent to you. You will be notified of the Council's determination immediately thereafter.

Please contact our office at 860-827-2935 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Melanie Bachman
Executive Director

MB/MP/laf

c: Service List dated May 8, 2023

Council Members

The Honorable Carol Hall, State Representative – 59th District carol.hall@housegop.ct.gov

The Honorable Jaime Foster, State Representative – 57th District jaime.foster@cga.ct.gov

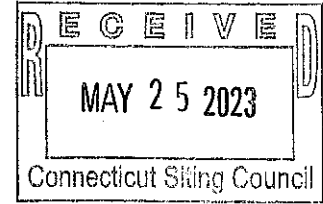
The Honorable Saud Anwar, State Senator - 3rd District saud.anwar@cga.ct.gov

The Honorable Jason Bowsza, First Selectman, Town of East Windsor

jbowsza@eastwindsorct.com

May 17, 2023

Dawn Dolloff
8 Wolfersdord Road
East Windsor, CT 06106



Melanie Bachman, Executive Director
Connecticut Siting Council
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New Britain, CT 06051
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ORIGINAL

Subject: Petition No. 1572, East Windsor Solar Two, LLC, 31 Thrall Road, East Windsor, CT.
Request for a Public Hearing and my comments and request for Consideration of
Cumulative Impact of Solar Developments in East Windsor.

Dear Members of the Connecticut Siting Council,

I write to you as a concerned resident of East Windsor, a small, rural community that is witnessing an unprecedented influx of commercial solar projects. While I am supportive of our state's transition to a clean, renewable energy future, I am increasingly alarmed by the scale and number of these developments in our community, including the recently approved Gravel Pit Solar 485-acre commercial solar project expected to generate 120 megawatts, purported to be the largest of its kind in the Northeast.

Our town, comprised of five small villages and 11,000 residents, *is already slated for nearly 200 megawatts of solar farms that have been approved by the Siting Council.* This is a substantial burden for a community of our size to bear and seems to be in contradiction with Connecticut's Comprehensive Energy Strategy, which emphasizes sustainable, orderly development and the fair sharing of costs and benefits in the transition to a zero-carbon economy.

East Windsor is a farming town with average household incomes, and with more than 9% of our residents living in poverty. The development of commercial solar projects has not brought significant economic benefits to our community. The annual tax income from Gravel Pit Solar is only \$378,000. This is less than half of the taxes that would have been paid based on the cost of the project. While temporary jobs are created during the construction phase, long-term employment opportunities from these projects are minimal. Industrial solar is invading East Windsor, brought here by lower taxes and perceived weak and disorganized local opposition. *The word exploitation is aptly applied to this situation.* The construction and maintenance of these projects place a significant burden on our town's limited resources, including fire and emergency services, roads, public services, and utilities.

Moreover, the conversion of agricultural and natural areas into industrial solar farms is dramatically altering the character of our town. This will negatively impact property values and the quality of life for residents, which is not in alignment with the state's goal of sustaining the character of local communities and enriching the state's economy.

The state's official energy plan says that it "should prioritize approaches that ensure sustainable, orderly development of our clean energy economy and *ensure the benefits and costs of shifting to a zero-carbon economy are fairly shared across all Connecticut residents and businesses.*" The official plan also says that "*A focus on broader benefit to communities is key.*" The commercial solar coming to East Windsor *offers little benefit to the community, damages rather than sustains the character of our town, and makes our small part of the state a less desirable place to live and work.*

These commercial solar projects offer minimal benefits to small rural communities like ours, and the local burdens are high. In East Windsor we are trying to sustain the character of rural farming community. Unless the Siting Council recognizes these cumulative adverse impacts, *it will continue to unfairly and inequitably shift the burden of the state's goal of a clean energy economy onto my town, and it will deepen the barriers to our local goals.*

The siting counsel does have authority to consider these impacts. For example, Connecticut General Statute 16a-3a, integrated resource plan, requires that IRP consider the effects on participants and nonparticipants, which includes the residents of the five villages of East Windsor.

I respectfully request that the Siting Council take these concerns into account when reviewing future proposals for solar development in East Windsor. Specifically, I urge you to:

1. Conduct a comprehensive study of the cumulative impacts of the approved and proposed solar developments in our town, including impacts on the local environment, infrastructure, property values, and community character.
2. Reevaluate the criteria for project approval to ensure a more equitable distribution of solar projects across the state, taking into account the existing burden on small communities like ours.
3. Advocate for more inclusive and accessible public engagement processes to ensure that all residents, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, have a say in these decisions.

We all share a common goal of transitioning to a more sustainable energy future. But this transition should not come at the expense of small, rural communities like ours. I am confident that with more thoughtful planning and consideration of local impacts, we can strike a better balance between advancing our renewable energy goals and preserving the character and well-being of our communities.

Please consider the following in your deliberations on the application before you.

1. *Sustainable, Orderly Development:* Since the pace and scale of solar farm development in East Windsor is causing disruption and harm to the local community and

environment, this would be contrary to the goal of "sustainable, orderly development." A more measured and planned approach to solar development will take into account the cumulative impacts on small towns like mine.

2. *Fair Sharing of Benefits and Costs:* While the transition to renewable energy has statewide benefits in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the local costs (in terms of changes to the landscape, potential impacts on property values, strain on local infrastructure, etc.) are being borne by a small number of communities. *I argue for a more equitable distribution of these projects across the state.*

3. *Benefit to Communities:* Because the solar farm developments are not bringing significant benefits to East Windsor (e.g., in terms of jobs, community investment, etc.), these developments are inconsistent with aligning with the state's goal of focusing on "broader benefit to communities."

4. *Sustaining the Character of Local Communities:* Large-scale industrial solar installations can dramatically alter the character of a rural town like East Windsor. This contradicts the state's goal of sustaining the character of local communities.

5. *Linking to Economic Growth and Sustainable Development:* Since the solar installations are not contributing to economic growth or sustainable development in East Windsor (e.g., if they're displacing agricultural land, not creating many long-term jobs, taxes are minimal, etc.), new proposals are not warranted under the state's official energy plan.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your positive response and actions that ensure a fairer distribution of the benefits and costs of our shared clean energy future.

Sincerely,



Dawn Dolloff

cc:

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