



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**

September 21, 2023

Brett Mickelson, President  
Ostap Mishtal, Vice President  
Sarah O'Donnell, Treasurer  
Surryia Chaudhry, Secretary  
Philippe Gastineau, Director  
Tom Jones, Director  
Erick Dal Molin, Director  
Ostap Mishtal, Safety & Training Advisors  
Doug Hendrix, Safety & Training Advisors  
Connecticut Parachutists Inc.  
360 Somers Road  
Ellington, CT 06029  
[cpi@skydivect.com](mailto:cpi@skydivect.com)

RE: **PETITION NO. 1589** – USS Somers Solar, 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 3.0-megawatt AC solar photovoltaic electric generating facility located at 360 Somers Road, Ellington, Connecticut, and associated electrical interconnection.

Dear Board of Directors and Safety & Training Advisors:

The Connecticut Siting Council (Council) is in receipt of your Request for a Public Hearing, dated September 20, 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 A. Bachman  
Executive Director

MAB/IN/dll

c: Service List dated August 24, 2023  
Council Members

From: Connecticut Parachutists Inc <cpi@skydivect.com>  
Sent: Wednesday, September 20, 2023 1:23 PM  
To: CSC-DL Siting Council <Siting.Council@ct.gov>  
Cc: cpiboard@mg.skydivect.com  
Subject: Petition No. 1589: Public comment and hearing request

Hello Siting Council members,

Connecticut Parachutists, Inc. would like to submit the attached letter as public comment for Petition No. 1589. Additionally, CPI would like to request an in-person and virtual hearing on this matter.

We are also attaching a video as described in and in support of our comments.

Please reply all to this email with your response.

Thank you!

<https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdrive.google.com%2Ffile%2Fd%2F1QKossQfd3wrgDtjI0CJ8kZnDzONvvMMS%2Fview&data=05%7C01%7CDakota.LaFountain%40ct.gov%7C43c64f4feac44adb7e9908dbb9fe319f%7C118b7cfaa3dd48b9b02631ff69bb738b%7C0%7C0%7C638308274765761720%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWlloiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6Iik1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C1000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=AprisHrfZG3aAoElykwC0dU5CL6sTSgVMfEwNvzi4wA%3D&reserved=0>

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Connecticut Parachutists Inc  
360 Somers Rd  
Ellington Airport  
Ellington, CT 06029  
860-871-0021  
skydivect.com



September 15, 2023

State of Connecticut  
Connecticut Siting Council  
10 Franklin Square  
New Britain, CT 06051  
860-827-2935  
[siting.council@ct.gov](mailto:siting.council@ct.gov)  
<https://portal.ct.gov/csc>

RE: [Petition No. 1589](#) – USS Somers Solar, 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 3.0-megawatt AC solar photovoltaic electric generating facility located at 360 Somers Road, Ellington, Connecticut, and associated electrical interconnection.

To whom it may concern,

Please recognize the following letter as public comment about the above petition. Additionally, please consider this a formal request for a public hearing in person and virtually.

Connecticut Parachutists, Inc. (CPI) was established in 1962, making it one of the oldest skydiving clubs in the country. CPI has been based at Ellington Airport since 1970. CPI's long pedigree of winning across multiple disciplines at collegiates, nationals, and worlds is why it is known as the "Home of Champions". CPI also introduces thousands of customers to skydiving every year through our tandem and Accelerated Free Fall student programs. CPI has an impeccable safety record and would like to keep it that way.

360 Somers Road is the location of Ellington Airport and the place where the airport's current owner has entered into an agreement with USS Somers Solar to place solar panels.

This proposed solar array raises numerous concerns for CPI:

First and foremost, CPI is extremely concerned for the safety and lives of its skydivers. The planned installation in the "north field" includes an area every skydiver is trained to use as a safety measure if they are unable to safely get to the primary landing zone.

Because this field is on airport property, we do not consider it a failure or an error if someone lands here, we consider it a safety precaution. There are many legitimate reasons a skydiver may land in this area, but the two most common would be:

- They had a parachute malfunction that caused them to be in control of their parachute at a much lower altitude than expected and are therefore unable to enter a normal landing pattern.
- The wind speed or direction changed between the time the plane took off and time the skydivers jumped, leaving them in a different position under canopy than expected.

Please review [the attached video](#) taken by a skydiver who landed in this field on September 8, 2023, due to strong, variable, and unpredictable wind conditions that changed while the plane climbed to exit altitude.

As the area is currently configured, a skydiver lands on grass or in a cornfield. These are both extremely safe things to land on. If solar panels are installed in this area, we expect severe injury or death if anyone lands in this area.

We also expect skydivers who are forced to seek alternate landing areas will find themselves navigating other hazards such as power lines, trees, and buildings (homes and businesses) for lack of a safe option. Each of these obstacles presents unique and dangerous challenges.

We are also concerned about the safety of pilots. CPI employs extremely talented and experienced pilots, but aircraft emergencies can still occur. There are also other pilots that keep their planes at Ellington Airport as well as visiting air traffic.

The most recent incident that would have been made far worse by a solar installation occurred on June 4, 2022. One of our pilots flew a routine pattern and all skydivers exited the plane safely. On the way back to the airport a fuel malfunction caused the engine to lose all power. When the plane landed it was unable to slow down enough to stop on the runway and ended up running into the field beyond it. If there had been solar panels in place, the plane would likely have been damaged beyond repair and the pilot may have been killed.

This proposed solar array is a danger to human life and should not be approved.

Sincerely,

**CPI Board of Directors**

Brett Mickelson, President  
Ostap Mishtal, Vice President  
Sarah O'Donnell, Treasurer

Surryia Chaudhry, Secretary  
Philippe Gastineau, Director  
Tom Jones, Director  
Erick Dal Molin, Director

**CPI Safety & Training Advisors**

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