



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

Web Site: portal.ct.gov/csc

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

February 8, 2024

The Honorable Tim Keeney
First Selectperson
Town of Somers
Town Hall
600 Main Street
P. O. Box 308
Somers, CT 06071
tkeeney@somersct.gov

RE: **PETITION NO. 1592** – Santa Fuel, Inc. petition for a declaratory ruling, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §4-176 and §16-50k, for the proposed construction, maintenance and operation of a 3.85-megawatt AC solar photovoltaic electric generating facility located at 159 South Road, Somers, Connecticut, and associated electrical interconnection.

Dear First Selectperson Keeney:

The Connecticut Siting Council (Council) is in receipt of your additional correspondence dated February 8, 2024 concerning the above-referenced petition. Thank you for taking the time to provide the Council with your comments.

At a public meeting held on December 5, 2023, the Council voted to hold a public hearing on the petition for the benefit of the public. The Council developed a deliberate schedule to provide all persons an opportunity to participate. This schedule included a public hearing on January 11, 2024.

Before reaching a final decision on a petition, the Council must carefully consider all of the facts contained in the evidentiary record that is developed by the Council, the petitioner, parties and intervenors in the proceeding, and consider all of the concerns received from members of the public who speak at the public hearing or submit written statements to the Council.

Copies of your correspondence will be distributed to the service list for the proceeding and will be administratively noticed in the record. Please note that you can view all of the documents related to this proceeding on our website at portal.ct.gov/csc under the “Pending Matters” link. You may also keep apprised of Council events on the website calendar and agenda.

Thank you for your interest and concern in this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Melanie A. Bachman
Executive Director

MAB/RDM/dll

c: Service List, September 19, 2023
Council Members

TOWN OF SOMERS

600 Main Street
Somers, Connecticut 06071
www.somersct.gov

FIRST SELECTMAN
Tim Keeney

TEL. (860) 763-8200
FAX (860) 763-8228

SELECTMAN
William Meier, III
Robert Schmidt

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

February 8, 2024

Melanie Bachman, Executive Director
Connecticut Siting Council
Ten Franklin Square
New Britain, CT 06051
Melanie.Bachman@ct.gov

PETITION NO. 1592 – Santa Fuel, Inc. proposed construction, maintenance and operation of a 3.85-megawatt AC solar photovoltaic electric generating facility located at 159 South Road, Somers, Connecticut, and associated electrical interconnection.

Dear Attorney Bachman,

On January 11, 2024, officials from the Town of Somers attended the Zoom Meeting (Remote Public Hearing) of the Evidentiary Session of Petition No. 1592. Based on the Petitioner's testimony, the Town of Somers is providing additional feedback and comments to the Connecticut Siting Council (CSC). Overall, we feel that the CSC has exhibited an adept level of professionalism and due diligence in their questioning of the Petitioner. Further, the Town agrees with the requests and suggestions made to the Petitioner by the CSC during the Evidentiary Session.

The Town noted the following specific suggestions and requests made to the Petitioner by the CSC:

1. Rather than the standard chain link fence on the perimeter of the site, could you substitute an agricultural type, animal-friendly, rural-looking fence? The Petitioner stated that if the CSC wanted that as a condition of obtaining approval, they, the Petitioner, would comply.

Town comment: We request that the CSC consider making the type of fence (agricultural, animal friendly, rural) a condition of the Petitioner obtaining approval.

2. The CSC requested if the Petitioner would be amenable to putting up further visibility barriers on South Road, state route 83. They suggested more plantings, i.e. some additional, visual tree impact barrier in the front of the site along South Road where the water drainage basin is located.

Town comment: We request that the CSC consider making putting up further visibility barriers (plantings) on South Road a condition of the Petitioner obtaining approval.

3. The CSC was looking for assurance that for the white spruce trees the Petitioner planted, any dead trees up to a certain number of years (5 years) would be replaced. This would ensure that the growth became mature and healthy. The Petitioner suggested while they had no plans to do this, that if the CSC would be looking for this as a condition of approval, the Petitioner would comply.

Town comment: We request that the CSC consider making the replacement of dead white spruce trees for up to a period of 5 years a condition of the Petitioner obtaining approval.

4. The CSC discussed that 187 South Road (owner, Karen Murphy) is the closest house to the site and it's only 60 feet away. The CSC is looking for a larger buffer to be accomplished because right now they feel it is rather close. They suggested that the Petitioner investigate increasing that distance beyond the 25 feet. They would like the Petitioner to consider moving the entire project 10-15 feet to the north to provide an adequate buffer at the south and not have to reduce the size of the facility and eliminate any panels.

Town comment: We request that the CSC consider making the Petitioner move the entire project 10-15 feet to the north to provide an adequate buffer at the south, a condition of the Petitioner obtaining approval.

5. The CSC is concerned about the electrical interconnection and the 7 poles to be installed along the access road. They requested that the Petitioner encourage Eversource to look into installing pad mount equipment along that area and go underground for the remainder.

Town comment: We request that the CSC consider making the Petitioner request that Eversource look into installing pad mount equipment, eliminate the poles, and go underground as a condition of the Petitioner obtaining approval.

Along with the above-mentioned comments, the Town shared a summary of the Petitioner's testimony with its Zoning Commission, seeking their comments. At its February 5, 2024, regular meeting, the Commission concurred with the Town comments presented above in this letter. Further, they expressed a strong concern regarding the size, location, and visibility of the array, as it is so close to the road. They questioned whether suitable visibility barriers could be achieved. They fear that the public will only realize that negative visibility impact when the array is finally constructed.

Thank you for the opportunity for the Town of Somers to submit our comments and for your consideration of them.

Very Truly Yours,



Timothy Keeney
First Selectman