



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

September 26, 2023

Joanna Shapiro
Wetland Agent
Town of Somers
Conservation Commission
600 Main Street
Somers, CT 06071
jshapiro@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 Joanna Shapiro:

The Connecticut Siting Council (Council) is in receipt of the Town of Somers Conservation Commission's correspondence dated September 19, 2023 concerning the above-referenced petition. Thank you for taking the time to provide the Council with the comments.

This petition will be placed on a future Council meeting agenda for discussion and decision. Please note that you can view all of the documents related to this petition 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.

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

Copies of your correspondence will be distributed to the service list for the petition.

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

Sincerely,

Melanie A. Bachman
Executive Director

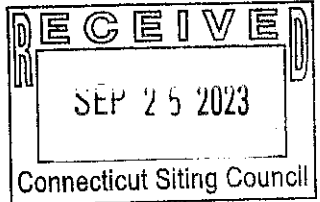
MAB/dll

c: Service List dated September 19, 2023
Council Members

PE 1592



**TOWN OF SOMERS
Conservation Commission
600 Main Street**



ORIGINAL

September 19, 2023

Connecticut Siting Council
Ten Franklin Square
New Britain, CT 06051

Re: Santa Fuel – Proposed Solar Photovoltaic Electric Generating Facility, 159 South Road, Somers CT

To Whom It May Concern:

The Town of Somers Conservation Commission, which also serves as the municipal Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency, has received a Notice of Intent to File a Petition for Declaratory Ruling for Construction, Operation, and Maintenance of a 3.85 MW(ac) Solar Photovoltaic Electric Generating Facility at 159 South Road in Somers, Connecticut. Additionally, the applicant informally presented the project to the Conservation Commission at their August 2, 2023 meeting, at which they were seeking comment.

Regarding wetland impacts, the Somers Conservation Commission is appreciative of the CT Siting Council and CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection’s wetland setback requirements, which require that solar panels be located at least 100’ from wetland boundaries. This 100’ setback generally coincides with the Somers Inland Wetland and Watercourse Regulations, which specify a 100’ upland review area for locally approvable projects. There is additionally a 50’ no disturb area from wetlands. This separation distance alleviates some concerns related to potential wetland impacts that the Commission may otherwise have for a development project. Additionally, much of the subject property was previously a gravel pit, which was restored to a hayfield, and the nearest wetland areas seem to consist of manmade farm ponds. The most valuable wetland/watercourse resource near the site is Shady Brook, which runs east of the property, but a ridge separates the subject property from the brook, and runoff will not flow to that brook.

From a Conservation perspective, the project is largely being constructed on existing farmland. While the loss of local farmland is a concern in general, our understanding is that the land in question has not been maintained and used as productive farmland in a number of years. Additionally, a significant portion of the subject property is wooded, and abuts preserved wooded parcels, yet the topography of much of the wooded portion precludes solar development. Therefore, proposed tree clearing is minimal, and along the forest edge, and this project fortunately does not impact core forestland, which is another positive aspect of the proposal.

Regarding potential erosion issues, the applicant proposes to maintain existing vegetation on the site to the extent possible, which is preferable and should be more protective of natural resources. In addition, the Conservation Commission has requested that the plans be updated to reflect seeding with a pollinator mix in any areas that will be disturbed and reseeded, to add some ecological benefit to the site where possible.

With this minor plan modification, the Somers Conservation Commission is generally supportive of the project, with no significant concerns. Feel free to contact our Wetland Agent at 860.763.8221 or jshapiro@somersct.gov with any questions.

Sincerely,

Joanna Shapiro, Wetland Agent
On behalf of Joan Formeister, Chair, and the Somers Conservation Commission