

State of Connecticut Siting Council

PETITION NO. 1598 – Windsor Solar One, 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 445 River Street, Windsor, Connecticut, and associated electrical interconnection.

Post-Hearing Brief of Intervenor Lisa and Keith Bress

Keith Bress and Lisa Bress respectfully request the Council deny this petition on the grounds that it does not meet the criteria of “appropriate siting” as outlined on the website of the CT Siting Council. Part of the Council’s responsibility, as documented in the “About” section of the CT Siting Council clearly states that the Council’s responsibility requires “*balancing the need for adequate and reliable public utility services at the lowest reasonable cost to consumers with the need to protect the environment and ecology of the state and to minimize damage to scenic, historic, and recreational values*”.

If any Council members were to visit the site, which unfortunately did not occur, they could see in an instant this industrial scale solar facility will have a major impact on the scenic and historic value of the area for the next 30 years, despite the petitioner’s landscaping plan which the Council wisely amended. The close proximity of this facility to abutters, sidewalks, and homes across the street (at some points just 150 feet), will most certainly damage the scenic vista and forever change the historic landscape of this property. The plantings will take years to mature, leaving an unsightly view of huge metal panels for years and years, where there used to be green pastures and crops. Scholarly articles we submitted earlier in the process clearly indicated there are impacts to the farmland and biodiversity of the area when industrial scale solar is installed, particularly on farmland, that can’t be mitigated by the simple fixes left to this Developer to carry out.

If the experience of East Windsor residents is a predictor of the Developer’s response to community concerns, the Council should deny this petition *purely on those grounds*. Years after installation, residents are dealing with intolerable noise from inverters across the street from a residential site that now falls .5 decibels below the highest threshold allowable. This is despite very recent efforts to address it. It took years to get any kind of response from Verogy at all. If the Council cannot rely on the Developer, they cannot guarantee the protection of the environment, ecology and scenic value of the area as stated in their guidelines above.

Lastly, I refer the Council to the comments made to this petition by the Council on Environmental Quality on December 13th 2023, where they clearly outlined several concerns regarding the environmental impact of this project. Their concerns encompassed farmland, visibility and wildlife. There have been additional concerns noted by DEEP in their Preliminary Determination Letter that indicated several habitats (sand barren and wetlands), if disturbed, could impact threatened and species of concern (American Rubyspot and Eastern Box Turtle). How can approval can be granted when these issues have not been resolved? It was stated the expertise of a herpetologist, and certified botanist, needed to be sought. Reassuring, but they will be hired and overseen by the Petitioner. Please excuse my pessimism, but with the Developer having so much time and money invested in this project, isn’t that like having the “fox guarding the hen house”?

Having independent examiners oversee the protection of these species and habitats should be essential to maintain the integrity of this process. I believe this is another reason to deny this petition and guarantee the protection of the ***environment and ecology of the state***.

Thank you for your time,

Lisa and Keith Bress