



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL

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VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

January 26, 2024

TO: Service List, dated December 15, 2023

FROM: Melanie Bachman, Executive Director *MAB*

RE: **PETITION NO. 1602** - Glastonbury Solar One, LLC and VCP, LLC d/b/a Verogy, 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 17 Wickham Road, Glastonbury, Connecticut, and associated electrical interconnection.

Comments have been received from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection on January 26, 2024. A copy of the comments is attached for your review.

MAB/MP/dll

c: Council Members



January 26, 2024

Connecticut Siting Council
10 Franklin Square
New Britain, Connecticut 06051

RE: 3.0-MW Solar Photovoltaic Electric Generating Facility
Glastonbury Solar One, LLC
17 Wickham Road
Glastonbury, Connecticut
Petition No. 1602

Dear Members of the Connecticut Siting Council:

Staff of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) Office of Environmental Review & Strategic Initiatives have reviewed the above-referenced petition by Glastonbury Solar One, LLC (Petitioner) for a declaratory ruling that a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need is not required for the construction, operation, and maintenance of its 3.0-megawatt solar photovoltaic project (Project). The Project will occupy approximately 15-acres (Project Site). The Project Site is part of a larger 46.96-acre parcel (Property) located at 17 Wickham Road in Glastonbury.

A site visit was made on December 28th to observe the 15-acre Project Site, consisting of agricultural fields. Staff also observed the neighboring properties surrounding this area. The weather was 50 degrees and overcast.

The proposed Project consists of solar panels with a ground mounted steel racking structure utilizing a single axis tracking system. The array of panels and the equipment will be surrounded by a minimum seven-foot-high agricultural security fence. The proposed utility interconnection service poles will be located at the northeastern corner of the Property, where the existing access road connects to Hebron Avenue.

DEEP notes that the construction of facilities as proposed in this petition would support Connecticut's vision for a more affordable, cleaner, and more reliable energy future for the ratepayers of Connecticut. Bringing more zero carbon energy projects online furthers this vision by diversifying the regional fuel mix, and aids in achieving a 100% zero-carbon electric sector by 2040 as required by Connecticut General Statutes Sec. 22a-200a(a)(3). Developing grid-scale renewables is also imperative to the state's success in achieving its statutory goal of reducing carbon emissions by 45% below 2001 levels by 2030 and by 80% below 2001 levels by 2050.

Property Description

The Property consists of a cemetery in the eastern portion and open agricultural fields in the western portion. There are also forested areas and wetlands in the southern portion of the Property. The Project is proposed to be located in the agricultural fields on the western portion of the Property and will occupy approximately 15 acres.

DEEP staff observed that the majority of the Project Site was relatively flat, and contained agricultural crops, predominantly corn, as well as an area for strawberries and a small pumpkin patch. A wire fence surrounds the agricultural field as does a dirt access road. The dirt access road on the southern part of the Project Site was observed to have some erosion impacts from rainwater running off the crops.

During the visit, DEEP staff observed a lower elevation portion of the Property, to the north of the Project Site and to the south of the gravel parking area, that appeared to be flooded from recent rainfall.

DEEP staff also viewed surrounding residential properties. Residences on Glen Place have a view of the Project Site, due to close proximity and deciduous vegetation. The Glen Place residences are discussed further in the “Visual” commentary section below. The residence at 1150 Hebron Avenue, adjacent to the western edge of the property, has appropriate screening for visual impact reduction, including a lower elevation and coniferous vegetation (white pine and hemlock), as well as deciduous trees. The residence across Hebron Avenue, located at 1165 Hebron Avenue, also has appropriate screening for visual impact reduction, including coniferous vegetation (white pine and white spruce trees).

Construction Stormwater Management

Construction-related land disturbances of one (1) acre or larger are regulated under CGS Section 22a-430 and under Section 402(p) of the federal Clean Water Act and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program. Construction projects involving five (5) or more acres of land disturbance require an individual NPDES discharge permit from DEEP or may be eligible to register for coverage under DEEP’s NPDES General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater and Dewatering Wastewaters from Construction Activities (general permit).

This Project falls into the category of involving five (5) or more acres of land disturbance, therefore requires either a general or an individual NPDES permit. The petitioner is aware of this requirement and plans to obtain a general permit prior to construction.

According to the petition, on September 6, 2023, the Petitioner met with members of the DEEP Stormwater Division to discuss the planned development of the stormwater

management design and erosion and sediment control plans for the Project. The Stormwater Division did not have specific comments on the Project at that time, nor had the Division received a registration for a general permit from the Petitioner as of December 28, 2023.

Core Forest

Connecticut General Statutes Chapter 277a Sec. 16-50k states that for a solar photovoltaic facility with a capacity of two or more megawatts, to be located on forestland, the DEEP must represent in writing, to the siting council that such project will not materially affect the status of such land as core forest. No tree clearing is proposed for the Project. Additionally, a letter of no material impact to core forest was received from DEEP on October 4, 2023.

Natural Diversity Database

A Natural Diversity Database Final Determination, dated October 6, 2023, was provided by DEEP's Wildlife Division which found that extant populations of one State Species of Concern: Eastern Box Turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*) are in the vicinity of the Project Site. Therefore, DEEP recommended protection strategies to the Petitioner for use during construction activities.

Miscellaneous Petition Commentary

Visual: The Petitioner proposes installing a minimum 7-foot-high agricultural fence around the perimeter of the Project Site, which will be a combination of both new and existing fencing. The Petitioner has conducted a visual impact study for the residence at 85 Glen Place, which is located directly south of the Project Site. The visual impact study includes the proposed 7-foot-high agricultural fence as a visual screening tool; however, the Petitioner does not state if the fence will be opaque.

DEEP observed that three properties (85, 86, and 89 Glen Place) have a close view of the Project Site, especially in the winter due to deciduous trees and vegetation. DEEP recommends the addition of visual screening for these properties, either in the form of coniferous vegetation or opaque fencing, to be maintained by the Petitioner.

Noise: The inverters at a solar facility create noise which can be intrusive to homes located in close proximity. The Petitioner has planned for equipment pads to be in the northeastern corner of the solar panel array footprint, which is approximately 145-feet away from the property boundary of the residence at 1238 Hebron Avenue. The Petitioner states that based on calculations, the 85 A-weighted decibels (dBA) of the inverters would reduce to approximately 51.3 dBA at a distance of 145-feet, which is below the maximum allowable of 61 dBA daytime limit. However, DEEP believes the equipment pads and inverters would still have potential to be a noise nuisance to this residence. DEEP recommends moving the equipment pads and

inverters further south from the current proposed location or, if this is not possible, to have an enclosure for the equipment pads, to reduce sound.

Inconsistencies: The Petitioner is Glastonbury Solar One LLC, however on page 14 of the petition, the Petitioner refers to the “Windsor Solar One Project team”.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this application and to submit these comments to the Connecticut Siting Council. Should Connecticut Siting Council staff have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 860.424.3708 or via jordan.herpich@ct.gov.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jordan Herpich".

Jordan Herpich
Environmental Analyst 1

CC: Katie Dykes, DEEP Commissioner