

**Public Hearing Testimony of Dennis Schain
Member, Manchester Board of Directors
Re: Petition No. 1609
May 2, 2024**

My name is Dennis Schain. I am an elected member of Manchester's legislative body, the Board of Directors, which is our town's equivalent of a town council. I am also a long-time resident of Manchester, with a residence at 245 Redwood Rd.

I am submitting this testimony concerning Petition No. 1609, the proposal from Tritec Americas, LLC for a 0.999-megawatt AC solar photovoltaic generating facility to be located at 250 Carter St., Manchester.

Tritec Americas seeks to authority to construct this proposed solar generating facility under a process made available through the Siting Council.

This process does *not* require the project to gain approvals from municipal land use regulatory bodies. In the absence of formal local involvement, however, the Siting Council has a special obligation to give serious consideration to land use issues raised by the Carter St. project.

It is quite clear from the volume of correspondence, information, and material submitted to the Siting Council that there are a number of significant land use issues related to this proposed project.

These issues range from concern for wetlands impacts, management of storm water runoff, and the potential creation of groundwater volumes that could have adverse effects on nearby residents. These and other potential land use impacts are detailed in a March 5 submission on behalf of the Manchester Planning and Zoning Commission and town planning staff.

I would also call particular attention to an issue raised by Manchester Corporation Counsel John Sullivan in his April 9 letter to the Siting Council seeking Party status for the Town of Manchester.

In this filing, Attorney Sullivan noted that in December of 1997, the Manchester Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) denied a request to change the zoning for the 250 Carter St. property. The requested zone change would have allowed for higher density residential development on the site, than is allowed under its Rural Residential (RR) status.

In a unanimous vote against the zone change, the PZC said it acted to “keep the site consistent with the surrounding rural residential area and the (town) Plan of Development.”

As Attorney Sullivan wrote, “If the Manchester PZC denied a change from RR to RAA, which in effect was a moderately more intense rural residence use, then it strains credulity for TRITEC to urge that the Siting Council, which is statutorily obligated to consider a municipality’s planning and zoning regulations, to approve such an extreme intensive use as proposed by TRITEC.”

The concerns raised by neighbors of the proposed project, as well as by town staff and town officials, do not stem from ignorance of the need for our society to address the challenges of climate change. We fully understand the imperative to increase our state’s reliance on solar and other renewable energy sources and reduce the use of fossil fuels to generate the electricity we need.

And, in fact, Manchester is a proven leader in this arena.

We have just constructed the state’s first certified Net Zero public school, with two others set to be completed over the next year. In addition, our goal for a new, 21st Century public library we will be building on our Main St. is to have that facility also achieve Net Zero status.

Under a program of the Connecticut Green Bank, we installed solar panels on our water treatment plant as well as on six school facilities.

Through a wide range of initiatives aimed at sustainability, energy efficiency, and waste reduction we have achieved the Climate Leader Designation and Silver Award status from Sustainable CT.

It is our concern, however, that the state’s move toward an increased share of renewable power be satisfied in a manner that comports with local land use requirements that help protect the environment and ecology and the well-being of local residents.

Concerns have been raised that the proposed Tritec project at 250 Carter St. does not meet this test. I urge the Siting Council to give full attention to these concerns.

Thank you.