



**Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council (CEEJAC)
Land and Energy & Technology Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, August 19, 2025; 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM**

Link to recording:

https://ctdeep.zoom.us/rec/share/33KWQQLlvW3hPc1kpRbVNHqHEJebZvK_P8bglRoordyFKTJ8M-TDCQh0QjUql0aJ.zOC2kUB-2lvDWb_7

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I. Welcome from Co-Chairs, Yaw Darko and Jhoni Ada

**II. Shared Clean Energy Facilities (SCEF) Program Overview
Presented by Claire Sickinger, CT DEEP**

- SCEF is a clean energy procurement run annually by Eversource
- The program is currently planning for the 2026 year (Year 7) procurement
 - Price cap
 - Bid preferences
 - Revisions to the program
- Each year, procuring clean energy and subscribers can receive credit on their energy bill
 - Enfield, Norfolk, Colchester, Derby, Milford
- Requirement: 50% low-income customers, including affordable housing
- Speaking specifically about bid preferences
 - These are used to incentivize project types/characteristics that help achieve state policy goals, even if they make the project more expensive
 - Past bid preferences
 - 20% bid preferences on landfill and brownfields
 - 30 for solar canopy projects
 - Year 7 Recommendation
 - 20 for landfills and brownfields
 - 40% solar canopy
 - Distressed municipalities
 - The project will pay taxes to municipalities

- 10 out of 52 projects are located in EJ communities (West Haven, Bridgeport, Stratford, Groton, Plainfield, Griswold)
- Possibilities:
 - Bid preference for all projects located in Distressed Municipalities
 - Increased bid preference for projects located on landfills or brownfields
 - For projects such as locating a certain distance away from areas zoned as residential
- Lack of bid preference for projects in Distressed Municipalities doesn't prevent customers in distressed municipalities from becoming subscribers
 - EJ communities prioritized subscriptions as well as other customers who meet certain criteria
- Should DEEP recommend a bid preference for projects sited in Distressed Municipalities to PURA?
 - If so, which projects should be eligible?

III. Q&A and Discussion

Question about the waiting period/ lottery... unsure about the indeterminate amount of time that leaves folks in a limbo. How quickly new projects will be put online seems to be the reason for the waiting period. There are no estimates that are given.

- DEEP Response: DEEP doesn't have a timeline. There have been issues with supply chain issues and tariffs, and that might be contributing to the backlog. Most of the subscribers will automatically be enrolled by their electric company because Eversource and UI have a way to figure out who is eligible. They run a lottery and subscribe folks, and folks can opt out. You can apply as well. This program began in 2020, and the program was supposed to come online in 3-4 years, so we are hoping more folks will be able to get this benefit each year.

Question: Is there anyone here from UI or Eversource who could update us on the projects, to Peter's question?

Question: What is the reasoning for placing hosting facilities in Distressed Municipality?

- DEEP Response: Just something that is being considered. Some benefits: The customers would be prioritized for subscriptions for that project, solar dev. Would pay taxes to the municipality where it is located.

- **DEEP Response:** Recognizing that energy infrastructure sited in EJ communities has had detrimental impacts and has not had direct benefits, which is why they are looking for feedback.

Question: Can you provide an update on where there are active projects? What were some of the statistical benefits that came from those projects? There are about 5000 customers in UI and fewer for Eversource. Some concrete information that would be beneficial. I think it's a good idea to prioritize residents in DMs, however I don't see why that needs to be connected to where the facility is located

- **DEEP Response:** EJ communities are prioritized for subscriptions regardless of where it is located. This is in particular for DM. ie. Waterbury residents would be prioritized. If in Simsbury, anyone from Hartford, Torrington (other EJ communities) would be prioritized.
- **DEEP Response:** If the feedback is that it doesn't make sense, that makes sense too.
 - Electric customers can subscribe to the program and receive a \$0.025/kwh credit on their energy bill
 - Required subscriber breakdown: 50% low-income customers (including affordable housing), 20% small business customers, 20% low- and moderate-income customers, and 10% any eligible customer

SCEF ID	Electric Distribution Company	Municipality	Technology	Size (MW)	Number of Subscribers
SCEF-7122	Eversource	Enfield	Solar	4	678
SCEF2-7856	Eversource	Norfolk	Solar	4	398
SCEF3-8532	Eversource	Enfield	Solar	4	519
SCEF3-8547	Eversource	Colchester	Solar	3.984	785
SCEF12007101 724169	United Illuminating	Derby	Fuel cell	2.8	735
SCEF12007101 852221	United Illuminating	Milford	Solar	1.5	211

Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection

8/12/2025

Question: How do future subscribers engage with the lottery?

- **DEEP Response:** If you are eligible, you are in the lottery already. But you can also apply, which would allow for those who might not have been identified to be part of the lottery.

Question: What about small businesses and other organizations or moderate-income customers?

- **DEEP Response:** There are specific criteria that are applied to who can apply. Links on DEEP site how to apply

Question: Municipality Benefit v. Community Concerns about site location. And sometimes municipality and community might be aligned and in some cases, there might be dissent. Is there a process to take those things into consideration? Or is it just the siting council?

- DEEP Response: There is just the SCEF siting council that weighs in

Comment: This is an area of concern. Kathy's describing points to why so many of these polluting power plants have been placed in EJC's in the first place. We need some kind of process that takes these things into account.

IV. Bates Friends Forever Presentation

Speakers: Kate Berrigan, Frida Berrigan & Patrick

- New London Park, 85 acres, mostly wooded park in New London, the largest green space in New London -- Several miles of hiking trails
- Acquired by New London (early 1900s), and different amenities
 - Became a dumping site for the city in the 1960s
 - Closed in 1991 due to health concerns
- Landfills & brownfields as sites for solar siting (Greenskies LLC), construction has started for a solar array
 - Meadow type
 - Initial phases of construction have begun
- Increased access to the park, poorly considered development
 - The city has wanted to make this space better for the public
- Secured grants for forestry and invasive management; hoping to reseed this area to promote biodiversity and habitat, expand hikes, plant identification, etc., youth, environmental education, and preservation
- Concerned about dumping of construction debris throughout the park
- June 2024 was the first time they even heard about the solar array construction
 - 4-acre solar field, but 20 acres have been given to this development
 - "Mandate from DEEP" to do a solar field on top of this landfill
 - Landfills being used in other spaces are on the edge of town and not in the middle of a public park, and compounding this policy does not seem to be the right approach.
 - Two-prong Fight: Fighting at the Municipal level and also working to steward the forested part of the park
 - Inland and wetland commissions
 - City folks had never been to Bates Woods, and have been trying to work with DEEP in all of this.

- Op-eds, Earned Media, Public Conversation with the Mayor after exhausting all other avenues
- Feedback: The City could use DEEP and access levers within the state, but the DM community could not. As a group of individuals living in this area, they could not get the same access to DEEP for help -- until it was too late.
 - Take into consideration city geography, the residents that will be impacted, and what they value.
- Give guidelines for how municipalities will access this money. There should be conversations about cost sharing for the residents. Incentives for the canopy should be highlighted, and some limitations on residential areas are great, but there should be limitations that bar parks from becoming solar sites.
 - Definition of green spaces and parks, and not allowing

V. Presentation by City of Bridgeport Office of Sustainability

Speaker: Chadwick Schroeder

- Sustainability Office with a small staff
- Big Picture: Although an expert in renewable energy, especially in Bridgeport, when these projects come up, there is a lot that goes into making sure that developers are not taking advantage of the city,
 - Pitched on a meter project and at the same time and same project. But there is a lot that is being thrown at them in a short amount of time
 - There were about 3 people in the city who were involved in the project and even understood what the proposals were
- There is an incentive to have these projects without an appropriate amount of community involvement and engagement, and that puts pressure on the municipality to communicate to the community
 - To address power dynamics
 - To educate the community
- We know what we need to do to address climate change but there needs to be an address of the circumstances that keep coming up
 - Community members might not understand climate change, renewable energy deployment, the electrical grid
 - They are looking at the energy infrastructure that is in their backyard
- Preserve parkland and not green gentrification, fix the energy grid, but do not have all the answers, but the recurring theme:
 - The community needs to be informed
 - Municipalities are not monolithic; there are complex relationships within each department. Helps with addressing some things.

- Still had trouble figuring out things, had help from the Green Bank explaining things, but it is not set up to protect community members or the environment
 - Figuring out those goals while not repeating those same EJ concerns
 - Instead of thinking just about solar energy development, we should be thinking about Food production, green manufacturing, electrical grid that is fixed-- all of which are important to EJ and DM communities
- Inclusions/ Requirements for Community Benefit Agreements
- Developers were aware of the people and the personalities within the government, and the land was not owned by the city; there were caps and also forests, making it different from Bates
 - Still required a lot of handholding
 - Requires vigilance, public meeting requirements
- Not to conflate city/municipality and community. They are distinct
- Bridgeport had a unique developer bringing in experts and also having the developers present to talk to the community
 - Bring your engineers and your people
 - Builds trust
 - Interested in agrivoltaics -- ideas that came from EJ advocates that worked on this
- In our case, it serves all the needs, conservation agreements in the agreements that was signed, but if Chad were not there, this project would not have ended the same way
 - Community is the start and end

VI. Q&A and Discussion

Question: What role can a legally binding community benefit agreement play? What are some examples of penalties that have been implemented when project agreements/community benefit agreements aren't met?

- Response from Chadwick: Libraries of filed CBAs, legal requirements, claw back mechanisms -- out there but hidden

Question: Are all the sites in this program on public lands (e.g., municipal or state), or does the program partner with businesses for siting? I live in New Britain, which is a 2024 EJ Distressed Community. Behind my house is an open drainage sump belonging to Stop & Shop (and their roof) and a partially unused parking lot owned by Stanley, where a solar site could be located with cooperation and benefits to these companies and surrounding residents. Does this program address this kind of project? How to start?

- Response from DEEP: DEEP and the energy companies are not asking to build on sites; it is the developers who look at sites and partner to bring these projects to their communities. DEEP isn't asking for them to be located on public lands, but it is the owner that can reach out to a solar developer, and then it could potentially be brought to the SCEF program.
 - DEEP mapping tool: These are resources for those of you interested in accessing map resources to see renewable energy in context with your community:
 - Link to Press Release on launch in May of Community Renewable Energy Siting Tool (CREST): <https://portal.ct.gov/deep/news-releases/news-releases---2025/deep-launches-new-online-tool-to-assist-solar-siting>
 - Link to UConn CLEAR webinar recording and slides from June 18th to see live demo of CREST: [Community Renewable Energy Siting Tool \(CREST\) Introduction and Demonstration | Center for Land Use Education and Research](#)

Comment: I'm hearing a theme that I think is extremely important for DEEP to take away from this meeting. Many distressed municipalities have governments that do not necessarily represent the interests/ views of the residents. To just deal with the municipal government and tax revenue misses a lot of the benefits that could impact these communities (ie, green business investment to Chadwick's point).

Comment: Residents are playing catch-up and then meeting with municipal officials that expected to be grateful and not slow down the process, instead of being invited to the table at the very beginning and helping to define what community benefit looks like.

Comment: Being able to change parts of the project based on the feedback from the community. Community conversations are not a setback; revisions based on community conversations are not a setback. Incentivizing that.

Comment - Municipal Aggregation/ Community Aggregation has been really popular in the states around us. Allows communities to focus on having their own green energy installations, solar in particular. Also has the advantage of lowering electric bills. <https://thirdact.org/connecticut/> ; David Roberts' podcast called Volts <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/ann-arbors-experiment-with-a-new-kind-of-utility/id1548554104?i=1000718698635>

Comment: Consideration for communities that are challenged when it comes to permitting processes for historic preservation designations. Does the local historic commission for the municipality prevent you from installing solar?

Comment: SCEF is beneficial for folks who cannot put solar but can get on bill credits and benefits, but not much DEEP can do for municipal there, but SCEF is one response to that kind of issue

Comment: It's a good question, something DEEP could help provide information for local folks on, as well as to track, how this impacts adoption

Comment: Historic Preservation, the state can pay to improve a historic home, and it doesn't prohibit solar.

VII. Recommendations:

1. It is concerning when there is a broad policy that impacts DM, be considerate that policy might take away community engagement and input. Beware of overarching policies.
2. Many distressed municipalities have governments that do not necessarily represent the interests/ views of the residents. To just deal with the municipal government and tax revenue misses a lot of the benefits that could impact these communities.
3. Being able to change parts of the project based on feedback from the community. Community conversations are not a setback; revisions based on community conversations are not a setback. Incentivizing that.
4. The City could use DEEP and access levers within the state, but the DM community could not. As a group of individuals living in this area, they could not get the same access to DEEP for help -- until it was too late.
5. Take into consideration city geography, the residents that will be impacted, and what they value.