APPENDIX 21: CONNECTICUT'S CLIMATE GOALS AND SOLAR SITING

Connecticut has long been recognized nationally for creating aggressive goals and building momentum to fight global warming. The State created its first Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3) in 2015, the legislature passed the Climate Change Planning and Resiliency Act of 2018, and in 2022, Governor Lamont signed into law climate change legislation to eliminate GHG emissions from electricity supplied to CT customers, among other actions.

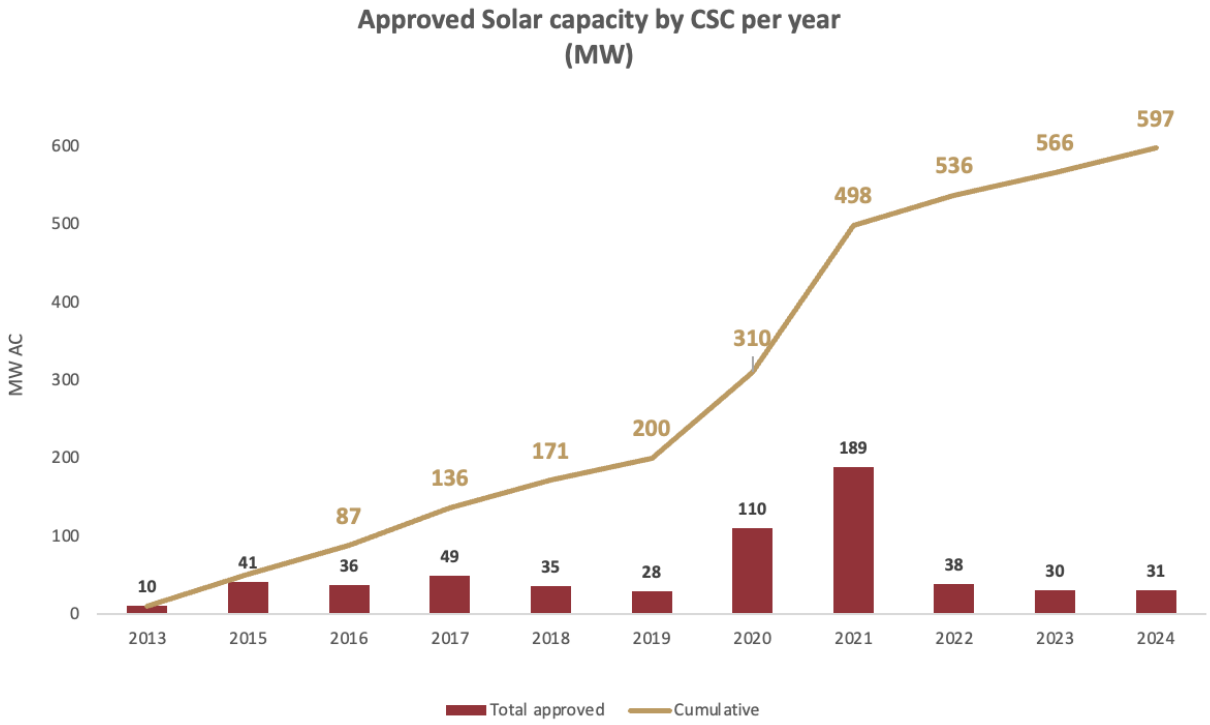
As a result, Connecticut has set ambitious goals to guide its GHG emission reductions:

- Attain 1990 GHG emissions levels by 2010 (achieved)
- Reduce GHG emissions by 10% below 1990 levels by 2020 (achieved)
- Reduce GHG emissions by 45% below 2001 levels by 2030
- Ensure no emissions from electricity supply by 2040
- Reduce GHG emissions by 80% below 2001 levels by 2050

Increasing electrification, renewable energy capacity, and investments in the grid are all essential parts of achieving Connecticut's climate goals for 2030 and beyond. A fundamental catalyst to ensure these renewable energy investments are possible in the State is the siting process, through which a project developer is given or denied authorization to build or upgrade renewable energy generation, storage, or transmission facilities.

The CSC's work has a significant impact on climate action and on achieving the State's emissions reduction goals. Through its rulings over the last decade, the CSC has approved the siting of nearly 600 MW of solar capacity in the State (for projects with individual capacities of 1MW or greater).[177] In addition to benefits related to climate, solar siting also provides air pollution benefits by reducing the need for operating fossil fuel-based electric generation resources already sited in environmental justice communities. Solar also contributes to meeting resource adequacy for Connecticut's energy needs and helps the electric grid to be more resilient, especially when paired over time with increased capacity for electric storage.

[177] N.B., there is a lag between "Approval" by the CSC and a project becoming "Operational."



Source: Created by DEEP based on information from the CSC

Alongside increasing electricity generation capacity, improved electrical transmission infrastructure is essential to allow for better access to clean, efficient and competitive energy supply alternatives. In the area of transmission, the CSC is also an important catalyst.

But these energy needs and considerations are not just local. In 2024, Connecticut joined a total of 10 Northeast states to establish a framework to improve interregional transmission planning and development, which will enhance grid reliability and accelerate the clean energy transition.[178] The continued expansion of renewable energy and transmission projects has placed additional burdens on State Siting authorities nationally, who must navigate complex regulatory frameworks and address community concerns to ensure the successful implementation of these projects.

[178] https://portal.ct.gov/deep/news-releases/news-releases---2024/newly-announced-agreement-on-electricity-transmission-moves-ne-states-toward-enhanced-grid