



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL

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### VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

September 29, 2017

Jason Bowsza  
Connecticut Department of Agriculture  
450 Columbus Blvd  
Hartford, CT 06103

RE: **PETITION NO. 1312** – Candlewood Solar LLC petition for a declaratory ruling that no Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need is required for the proposed construction, maintenance and operation of a 20 megawatt AC (26.5 megawatt DC) solar photovoltaic electric generating facility located on a 163 acre parcel at 197 Candlewood Mountain Road and associated electrical interconnection to Eversource Energy's Rocky River Substation on Kent Road in New Milford, Connecticut.

Dear Mr. Bowsza:

The Connecticut Siting Council (Council) requests your responses to the enclosed questions no later than October 20, 2017. To help expedite the Council's review, please file individual responses as soon as they are available.

Please forward an original and 15 copies to this office, as well as a copy via electronic mail. In accordance with the State Solid Waste Management Plan, the Council is requesting that all filings be submitted on recyclable paper, primarily regular weight white office paper. Please avoid using heavy stock paper, colored paper, and metal or plastic binders and separators. Fewer copies of bulk material may be provided as appropriate.

Copies of your responses shall be provided to all parties and intervenors listed on the service list, which can be found on the Council's pending matters website.

Any request for an extension of time to submit responses to interrogatories shall be submitted to the Council in writing pursuant to §16-50j-22a of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies.

Yours very truly,

Melanie A. Bachman  
Executive Director

MB/MP/laf

c: Parties and Intervenors



CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL

Affirmative Action / Equal Opportunity Employer

**Petition No. 1312**  
**Interrogatories to CT Department of Agriculture**  
**Set One**  
**September 29, 2017**

1. Referencing the Council's Hearing Program, Administrative Notice Item No. 91, "GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT, *Grow Connecticut Farms: Developing, Diversifying, and Promoting Agriculture*, December 2012", on page 5, recommendations to the Connecticut Department of Agriculture (DOAg) include: "Create an agriculture-friendly energy policy that includes agricultural net metering for power production and transmission, and qualification of agricultural anaerobic digestion project for zero emissions renewable energy credits (ZRECs)." Please describe efforts DOAg has made toward implementation of these recommendations.
2. Does Connecticut have a viable farm energy policy? Please describe.
3. Would on-farm energy production reduce costs and supplement farm income? What types of on-farm energy production are supported by DOAg?
4. Please describe the provisions of Connecticut's Agricultural Virtual Net Metering Program. How many farms have expressed an interest in this program?
5. What role could well managed agricultural lands play in climate change mitigation?
6. Do farms or farm activities contribute to greenhouse gas emissions? Are farms exempt from emissions reductions targets and other air regulations? What programs assist farmers with greenhouse gas emission reductions?
7. Did DOAg have a role in developing Public Act 17-218? Is so, why was the Public Act limited to prime farmland?
8. In Connecticut, does crop farming occur on soils that are not designated prime farmland or farmland of statewide significance? If so, describe measures that are used to ensure a sufficient crop yield.
9. Can agricultural fields that are managed as grassland for 20-25 years be restored for crop production? If so, describe the methods a farmer can use to restore the fields for crop use.
10. Does the use of agricultural herbicides and pesticides provide better soil health for agricultural production and social, economic and ecosystem benefits?
11. Could exposed agricultural soils during spring planting lead to stormwater runoff and sedimentation to adjacent streams and wetlands during heavy rain events? Is fertilizer runoff a detriment to water quality of nearby streams and wetlands?
12. Does the acreage of farmland soils include areas that are occupied by woodland, existing farm roads, and buildings?
13. In general, why does the NRCS soil mapping for the surrounding area depict prime agricultural lands within forested and developed residential areas?
14. Describe the steps necessary to convert a forested area with prime agricultural soils to a crop field.

15. Provide data that indicates the use of machinery and vehicles causes soil compaction. Is there a correlation between construction (or agricultural) vehicle/machinery weight and depth of compaction?
16. How does development of land for solar facilities damage soil resources? How is soil productivity compromised? What are the long-term impacts? Please provide directly related studies demonstrating such impacts.
17. Page 3 of Candlewood Solar LLC's Environmental Assessment notes that, "[T]he Town of New Milford GIS Mapping indicates that the soil unit 85B – Paxton and Montauk fine sandy loams, 3 to 8 percent slopes, very stony, is a designated locally important farmland soil." (See Environmental Assessment, Attachment E, Soils Map.) What is a "locally important farmland soil?"
18. In its comments dated August 30, 2017, the Council on Environmental Quality notes that, "The soils...are not prime and important farmland soils under the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) classifications. If, however, decades of agricultural activity have removed the stones, then it is possible that the soil could meet the criteria for prime or important farmland." Does DoAg agree with this? Explain. Under what circumstances could rocky soils not initially classified as important or prime farmland (but used for agriculture) be re-classified as important or prime farmland?
19. By letter dated September 18, 2017, the New Milford Farmland & Forest Preservation Committee notes that, "[A] solar farm is a better use of land than a built-out subdivision." Does DoAg agree with this? Explain.