

In The Matter Of:
Candlewood Solar, LLC, Petition

Public Hearing
September 26, 2017

BCT Reporting LLC
PO Box 1774
Bristol, CT 06010
860.302.1876

1 STATE OF CONNECTICUT
2 CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL

3
4 Petition No. 1312

5 Candlewood Solar, LLC, Petition for a Declaratory
6 Ruling That no Certificate of Environmental
7 Compatibility and Public Need is required for the
8 Proposed Construction, Maintenance and Operation of a
9 20 Megawatt AC (26.5 megawatt DC) Solar Photovoltaic
10 Electric Generating Facility Located on a 163 Acre
11 Parcel at 197 Candlewood Mountain Road and Associated
12 Electrical Interconnection to Eversource Energy's Rocky
13 River Substation on Kent Road in New Milford,
14 Connecticut

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16 Public Hearing Held at The E. Paul
17 Martin Room, Roger Sherman Town Hall, 10 Main
18 Street, New Milford, Connecticut, Tuesday,
19 September 26, 2017, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

20
21 H e l d B e f o r e :

22 ROBIN STEIN, Chairman
23
24
25

1 A p p e a r a n c e s :

2 Council Members:

3 JAMES J. MURPHY, JR.

4 Vice Chairman

5

6 ROBERT HANNON,

7 DEEP Designee

8

9 MICHAEL HARDER

10 DR. MICHAEL W. KLEMENS

11 ROBERT SILVESTRI

12 DANIEL P. LYNCH, JR.

13

14 Council Staff:

15 MELANIE BACHMAN, ESQ.,

16 Executive Director and Staff Attorney

17

18 MICHAEL PERRONE,

19 Siting Analyst

20

21 LISA FONTAINE,

22 Office Assistant

23

24

25

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon, ladies
2 and gentlemen. We'd like to get started. There
3 are a lot of you, so I'd like to start and keep
4 this moving.

5 I'd like to call to order this hearing
6 of the Connecticut Siting Council today, Tuesday,
7 September 26, 2017, 6:30 p.m. My name is Robin
8 Stein. I'm Chairman of the Connecticut Siting
9 Council.

10 Other members of the Council present are
11 Senator James Murphy, our Vice Chairman;
12 Mr. Hannon, our designee from the Department of
13 Energy and Environmental Protection;
14 Mr. Silvestri; Dr. Klemens; Mr. Harder; and
15 Mr. Lynch.

16 Members of the staff present are
17 Attorney Melanie Bachman, our Executive Director;
18 Mr. Perrone, siting analyst; and Lisa Fontaine,
19 our fiscal administrative officer.

20 This is a continuation of a public
21 hearing that began at 3:00 p.m. this afternoon.
22 Copies of the hearing program and the Council's
23 citizen guide to Siting Council procedures are
24 available for members of the public somewhere in
25 the back, I think.

1 This hearing is held pursuant to the
2 provisions of Title 16 of the Connecticut General
3 Statutes and of the Uniform Administrative
4 Procedure Act upon a petition from Candlewood
5 Solar, LLC, for declaratory ruling that no
6 certificate of environmental compatibility and
7 public need is required for the proposed
8 construction, maintenance and operation of a
9 20 megawatt solar photovoltaic electric generating
10 facility located on a 163 acre parcel at 197
11 Candlewood Mountain Road, and associated
12 electrical interconnection to Eversource Energy's
13 Rocky River Substation on Kent Road in New
14 Milford, Connecticut.

15 The petition was received by the Council
16 on June 28, 2017. The Council's legal notice of
17 the date and time of this hearing was published in
18 the Danbury News Times on July 26, 2017. Upon
19 this Council's request the petitioner erected a
20 sign at the entrance to the property from a public
21 road where the proposed facility is to be located
22 so as to inform the public of the name of the
23 petitioner, type of facility, hearing date and
24 location, and contact information for the Council.

25 This afternoon members of the Council,

1 staff and public personally conducted a field
2 review of the proposed site in order to observe
3 firsthand the potential effects of the proposal.

4 This hearing session tonight has been
5 reserved first for the public to make short
6 statements into the record. These public
7 statements are not subject to questions from the
8 parties or the Council, and members of the public
9 making statements may not ask questions of the
10 parties or the Council. These statements will
11 become part of the record for Council
12 consideration.

13 A sign-up sheet is available for those
14 who want to participate. Given the number of
15 people in the crowd, we ask you all to limit your
16 comments to three minutes, and we have a system
17 there to let you know, so hopefully we can keep
18 this moving again.

19 As a reminder to all, off-the-record
20 communication with a member of the Council or a
21 member of the Council's staff upon the merits of
22 this petition is prohibited by law.

23 I wish to note that parties and
24 interveners including their representatives and
25 witnesses -- and especially, I'll make note that

1 one of the parties and interveners, I believe it's
2 Rescue Candlewood Mountain. So if you're a part
3 of that group and you're represented by an
4 attorney you're not allowed to participate in this
5 hearing. You have your representation at the
6 evidentiary hearing.

7 I also wish to note for those who are
8 here and for the benefit of your friends and
9 neighbors who are unable to join us for the public
10 comment session, that you or they may send written
11 statements to the council within 30 days of the
12 date hereof, and such written statements will be
13 given the same weight as if spoken at the hearing.

14 Again, we ask each person making a
15 public statement to confine his or her statements
16 to the subject matter before the Council, and to
17 avoid unreasonable repetition so that we may hear
18 all of the concerns that you or your neighbors may
19 have.

20 And it's usually an exercise in
21 futility, but manifestations either in support or
22 in opposition just take time. So if you could
23 keep your applause and booing -- maybe go outside.

24 Again, please be advised that Council
25 cannot answer questions from the public about the

1 proposal. A verbatim transcript will be made of
2 the hearing and deposited at the New Milford,
3 Brookfield, and New Fairfield Town Clerks' offices
4 for the convenience of the public.

5 And we'll now start with the list.

6 A VOICE: Commissioner Stein, do we ever
7 do the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag?

8 THE CHAIRMAN: No, that's not something
9 we do customarily as part of our hearings.

10 A VOICE: Well, can we create a custom
11 and do a Pledge of Allegiance to the flag, sir?

12 THE CHAIRMAN: We're going to just
13 continue with the hearing. I don't really want to
14 get into a polemic about that.

15 A VOICE: Fair enough. Thank you.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: I will also apologize in
17 advance if I mispronounce, and I'll ask each
18 speaker when you come up to spell your last name.

19 The first speaker is Pat Welsh.

20 PAT WELSH: Thank you. It's with
21 respect and gratitude to the Siting Council that I
22 speak today representing views on the proposed
23 usage of our forest and our farmland on Candlewood
24 Mountain, proposed as a solar energy plant.

25 While supporting solar and other forms

1 of alternative energy strongly, it's
2 counterproductive in my view to clearcut over
3 70 acres of core forest in order to establish such
4 energy productivity. The loss of our natural
5 resources is irreversible, and with the panels
6 extending as close as 730 feet to Candlewood Lake
7 and with vernal pools and natural habitat on the
8 property disrupted, the full environmental impact
9 of such development remains unknown.

10 Several other areas in New Milford would
11 benefit from placement of solar panels. Some of
12 the less productive properties located on Route 7,
13 Danbury Road and with the old Century Brass plant
14 location available we can gladly welcome a solar
15 plant to New Milford as long as unnecessary
16 destruction is not a prerequisite.

17 As you have heard, Connecticut AB-1312
18 required an environmental study and sign-up by
19 DEEP prior to granting approval to the
20 construction of a solar site -- is now existing
21 law. The fact that Candlewood Solar filed just
22 three days prior to the law going into effect
23 should not permit our core forests and farmland to
24 be exposed to the destruction of environmental
25 ecosystems which form the nature and character of

1 this property.

2 Impact of the sun on the proposed field
3 of solar panels will cause glare, and although
4 panel treatment producing reduced glare has been
5 promised, no clear impact to Candlelight Airport
6 has been measured or determined. Public safety is
7 at risk. The panels will also be visible to many
8 New Milford and Sherman residents, particularly in
9 the winter.

10 You'll hear from experts at the
11 continuation in October of this hearing describing
12 the issues created by the placement of solar
13 panels on Candlewood Mountain. Without answers to
14 the environmental questions that have been raised
15 Congresswoman Esty and Senator Blumenthal have
16 both withdrawn support for the project. They also
17 advise that projects of this type are typically
18 most successful when the community has reached
19 consensus, which is clearly not the case here.

20 There are far too many unanswered
21 questions and a high probability that some of
22 those will remain by the time we have the next
23 meeting. The lack of foresight and detail caused
24 by the rush to meet deadlines has been established
25 by this proposal.

1 It's appropriate to assume that time
2 pressure will cause just as much disarray if
3 construction and operation of the solar panels is
4 permitted. I appeal to the Siting Council to
5 require testing in the form of a full
6 environmental impact study prior to permitting
7 this project to be considered for advancements.
8 There are so many reasons to say no.

9 Thank you.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Nancy -- is
11 it Saggese?

12 NANCY SAGGESE: Good day, everyone. And
13 thank you for taking so much time to review the
14 facts for Petition 1312, Candlewood Solar. Please
15 say no.

16 Please say no, no to the destruction and
17 devastation to the mountain. The existing
18 farmland and trees should not become a solar farm,
19 period. I know I've written to you many times,
20 but we'd like to reiterate a few of my concerns.

21 I am Nancy Saggese. I have a business
22 office and live in 195 Candlewood Mountain Road in
23 New Milford. My business is at 214 Candlewood
24 Mountain, and I believe I'm the only person who
25 has attended most of the meetings that have gone

1 on concerning Candlewood solar.

2 I have seen the rush to get support of
3 this project without enough information or
4 discussion. In my letter of July 19th I spoke
5 about transparency. There were at that time 30
6 meetings, and only one involved the residents of
7 the town.

8 The great news is the core group got the
9 word out. Our community is rallying and you are
10 here, and I thank you for that. If this were not
11 the case today New Milford might be saying, how
12 did this happen and how did we not know about it?

13 My environmental concerns are many.
14 Noise pollution, I was told there was no noise,
15 and -- but inverters make some noise, and this was
16 rather confusing. Regardless, I do know the noise
17 from 240 huge trucks going up a dirt path. More
18 noise with the trucks holding the steel holders
19 and the cement will be great. This does not
20 include the logging trucks which will be bringing
21 the mature tree timber from the 70 acres of
22 forest.

23 I live 75 yards from this quaint path.
24 The noise will not only disturb me as a person,
25 but it will have a negative impact on my business.

1 Who will be responsible for that?

2 Will Ameresco take on that
3 responsibility? Will they take on the
4 responsibility for the decline of the value in the
5 home in which I live, and those of other people on
6 the mountain? Will they be responsible for the
7 runoff coming into our ponds and our pools? The
8 dirt and dust from construction, to our homes,
9 will they be responsible?

10 My business brings in 5 to 10 thousand
11 tourists a year, many who eat locally, shop
12 locally, drink locally. Huge amounts of money are
13 spent on the town from Candlelight Farms. I
14 support our local businesses. I encourage guests
15 to do the same. This project does nothing for our
16 economic development in town and is not consistent
17 with this POCD.

18 Many of our businesses give back to the
19 community. This is what community does. This is
20 what community is. I get to enjoy the beautiful
21 trees and the wildlife that are on the mountain,
22 the beautiful birds, turkeys, owls, hawks, and the
23 singing that goes on in the mountains. At dawn
24 it's the birds. At dusk, the wildlife, the
25 coyotes, the wolves, the deer, the bobcats, the

1 bullfrogs, the smaller creatures who live
2 underground. They visit us often. We live in
3 harmony. Their habitat needs to stay protected.
4 Will Ameresco protect them?

5 Can a monetary value be placed on that?
6 If the project has no adverse environmental
7 impact, what does? According to the resumes, the
8 two managing representatives from Ameresco, Joel
9 Lindsay and Jim Walker have not done a project of
10 this magnitude.

11 Their entire experience on the many 70
12 projects they have worked on in aggregate are
13 approximately the total of this single project.
14 Have any of the small projects been on a mountain?
15 On top of a mountain has it's own set of issues.

16 Decommissioning is a huge concern. The
17 footprint, massive. What is today's cost to
18 decommission this project, to bring it back to
19 farmland? And actually, I am not sure how do we
20 restore forest. Do we have a bond that will cover
21 that?

22 If Candlewood Solar is no longer in
23 existence, if the panels are obsolete, or solar
24 panels are obsolete what happens? We need more
25 than good intentions here, and I know their

1 intentions are good, but how will the forest be
2 restored?

3 Thank you in advance. I know you viewed
4 this property and you agree that it's beautiful
5 property, and I thank you again for coming.

6 And I apologize for my glasses.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, ma'am.

8 Katy Francis.

9 KATY FRANCIS: My name is Katy Francis.
10 I have lived in New Milford my life, my whole life
11 on 123 Candlewood Mountain Road. I'm the fourth
12 generation to live there. My great grandparents
13 came from New York in the summers and then decided
14 to live here. My home I live in is where everyone
15 lived.

16 I have in my 60 years seen a lot of
17 changes in our town, positive some, but one of the
18 best parts about living on Candlewood Mountain
19 Road is that the forest is changing only in a good
20 way, its solitude, its beauty, its quiet. We have
21 brooks. We have such a diversity of wildlife.

22 Sometimes I don't like that they eat my
23 flowers, but let's face it, you know, a bear, and
24 a deer, and a woodchuck, and a wild coyote and you
25 name it. We have them all, and I love that about

1 it.

2 I have been involved in municipal
3 government here. I've served six years on the
4 town council, and I'm hoping to be reelected for
5 another two. I spent over four years on the
6 planning council and the POCD, which Nancy
7 referenced, I was part of planning that.

8 I'm a business owner, now retired. I'm
9 an active volunteer since I was a Brownie in the
10 second grade. I care about this town a lot.
11 Because I care about the town, all of our town, I
12 would argue against this if it was on another
13 beautiful piece of wooded property somewhere else
14 in town.

15 The fact that I live here -- my property
16 comes close to abutting, but I won't see it, but
17 I'll be impacted by it. All those wonderful
18 animals, where are they going to go? They're just
19 going to just move on down the road and find some
20 other place where people take such good care of
21 them? I like them where they are.

22 So I am not in favor of destroying
23 80 acres of beautiful property purely for profit.
24 When the proposal came in front of the town
25 council for the pilot program I voted no. It came

1 up again. I voted no.

2 There will be no jobs for New Milford
3 residents here. There is no need for extra energy
4 in this area. There is no shortage. All you need
5 to do is Google it and you'll find that out.

6 There will be no appreciable increase in
7 the tax that we'll receive supposedly to relieve
8 our residents of an increase. All of those nos.
9 I will say I hope that you, after seeing this
10 beautiful property have an understanding of why we
11 say, please, you say no to ruining this forest
12 strictly for profit and gain. There are many
13 other places where this could be put. It's all
14 about the money.

15 Thank you very much for coming to town
16 and taking the time to see us, and for coming
17 tonight to let us speak. Thank you.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Paul Elconin.

19 PAUL ELCONIN: My name is Paul Elconin.
20 I'm the Director of Land Conservation for the
21 Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust. So thank you for
22 the opportunity to speak tonight.

23 I'm writing and speaking to
24 express Weantinoge's opposition to the petitioners
25 request for a ruling that no certificate of

1 environmental compatibility and public need is
2 required for the proposed construction of the
3 20-megawatt facility.

4 Weantinoge, as do many of the people in
5 this room and in the town, fully supports the
6 development of solar and other renewable energy
7 resources, and believes that these energy sources
8 are vital to sustaining a healthy planet.

9 However, the utility scale solar facility by
10 converting farmland and intact core forest without
11 environmental reviews threatens already at-risk
12 plant and animal species, habitats, water supplies
13 and the like.

14 Weantinoge is encouraged that the
15 General Assembly passed Public Act 17-218, which
16 was effective July 1st of this year, to provide
17 greater protection in the siting process for
18 Connecticut's prime farmlands and core forests.

19 And we believe that Petition 1312, and
20 future large-scale solar projects, that the
21 Connecticut Siting Council should consider the
22 intent of the assembly as set forth in PA 17218,
23 and require the utility scale solar projects to
24 obtain their certificate of environmental
25 compatibility and public need, and that includes

1 this project.

2 So in the time I have I'm not
3 necessarily going to reiterate what other folks
4 have said, but -- and I'll go from, sort of, from
5 the bottom up of this letter.

6 In a November 15, 2016, letter to the
7 New Milford town planner, in response to questions
8 raised in an October 14, 2016, memo to the
9 developers, Ameresco wrote, and I quote, as part
10 of the overall permitting in the Connecticut
11 Siting Council process the project will conduct
12 all necessary wildlife studies.

13 So the applicant did not simply commit
14 to conducting all the required studies. They said
15 all necessary studies. So an industrial scale
16 80-acre development with a 68-acre clearcut will
17 directly and indirectly impact state resources and
18 state identified important natural resources. And
19 the public doesn't have enough information now on
20 what those impacts will be.

21 Also in a recent article in the New
22 Milford Spectrum the developer was quoted as
23 saying, the company is also offsetting their
24 removal of the trees by donating a hundred
25 acres from the mountain to a land trust to

1 preserve. This land would include a section of
2 the Blue Blaze Trail, and it goes on to, quote,
3 we're going to do that to mitigate and compensate
4 for the removal of the trees.

5 So we have two concerns with these
6 statements. The first is, is that while the
7 developer may desire to place acreage in
8 conservation, which is laudable and prescient and
9 forward thinking, many factors and steps are
10 necessary to complete the conservation
11 transaction. And to our knowledge, none of those
12 steps have been completed with Weantinoge or with
13 another local conservation organization.

14 Also in this case conservation is not
15 equivalent to mitigation. The 68 acres of core
16 forest that will be clearcut lie on the gentle
17 south face of the slope. Other contiguous
18 forestlands controlled by the developer, which are
19 the lands presumably available for conservation,
20 are located on steeper slopes with different
21 aspects, different soils, different substrates, et
22 cetera.

23 The remaining forestland will have
24 different species composition and microclimates
25 which may support plants and animals that vary

1 from the area to be cleared.

2 Again, a comprehensive environmental
3 assessment is necessary to determine what will be
4 impacted by the proposed solar farm and how the
5 proposed conservation may offset those impacts.
6 There just simply isn't enough information now to
7 determine whether what we might gain in
8 conservation will offset what we know we're going
9 to lose with the 68 acres.

10 So I urge the Siting Council to not
11 grant a certificate of compatibility and public
12 need until all of the impacts of this development
13 have been thoroughly vetted by independent and
14 qualified professionals.

15 Thank you.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Clay Cope.

17 CLAY COPE: I want to say thank you for
18 having us today. I had written to Melanie back --

19 Oh, Clay Cope. I'm the First Selectman
20 of Sherman. So we're the neighboring town to the
21 New Milford, and we try to be a good neighbor in
22 Sherman. And what I've heard from people that
23 have come into my office, as a three-term first
24 selectman, is they do not want to see this
25 development occur on Candlewood Mountain.

1 I have residents who live on Hubbell
2 Mountain Road, who live on Fox Run, who live on
3 Mill Pond, all in that area. And they're saying
4 to me, please be our voice and let Ms. Bachman and
5 the other members of the committee know that they
6 are against this, this project.

7 So thank you for coming tonight. I
8 think this is quite a display of people here and I
9 think it's the best part, obviously, of government
10 and of giving our voice to you to listen.

11 But again, as a resident of Sherman, as
12 the First Selectman of Sherman, and as someone
13 who's representing those neighbors, I felt
14 compelled to come tonight.

15 So thank you.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

17 Dominick -- is it Peburn?

18 DOMINICK PEBURN: Yes, sir.

19 Good evening. My name is Dominick
20 Peburn. I've been an active member of this
21 community for the past 40 years. I've been
22 involved in the development and construction of
23 commercial and residential projects totaling over
24 800,000 square feet, and have helped to bring more
25 than 250 small companies into the town over the

1 years.

2 There's always opposition to change.
3 Most of the opposition to my projects was, not in
4 my neighborhood, or, not in my backyard. People
5 like the concept and ideas, but didn't want the
6 projects built near them.

7 This Town has received more than
8 \$35 million in tax revenue from my various
9 projects without having to deplete town services
10 or road maintenance to add any tax burden to the
11 Town. The solar panel project is similar in that
12 it provides the Town with a 700 percent increase
13 in tax revenue without any burden for services or
14 roads.

15 I have walked the land several times in
16 the last month. After the land is cleared for
17 solar panels there will still be a 60-foot buffer
18 of trees around the perimeter. This project will
19 also consist of a landscaping berm which should
20 always ensure complete privacy for the neighbors.

21 I would like to bid the site work on
22 this project using local contractors to complete
23 the work. We would be using the most updated
24 equipment and shorten the time needed to prepare
25 the site. We will only be traveling over

1 1.8 miles of town road and 11.3 miles of state
2 highway for this short period of time.

3 I believe this could be a win-win
4 situation for our community since there will not
5 be a negative effect on the environment and the
6 land will revert back to its natural state at the
7 end of the lease.

8 Thank you for your time and
9 consideration for the clean air energy project.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

11 Can I just, you know, you want people to
12 respect you when you get up there. So come on,
13 let's be respectful of everybody.

14 ANDA STYLER: Hi. I just want to show
15 you this picture before I start talking. This is
16 an endangered species of a luna moth. Their
17 environment will be destroyed -- destroyed. They
18 are an endangered species and this landed on my
19 front door. I just wanted to show you that
20 picture.

21 I'm just a homeowner that's all. I've
22 lived in New Milford for 20 years. I live behind
23 Candlewood Mountain Road and I pay New Milford
24 taxes. When I heard about this solar plant being
25 built on 80 plus acres that will be completely

1 destroyed, I was appalled because this is my
2 backyard. I'm on Green Pond Road.

3 How can we desecrate the land without
4 carefully weighing out the consequences for doing
5 so? I'm not a scientist. I just live there and
6 it's beautiful, and I'm scared to death.

7 What right do we have to destroy a core
8 forest and ruin the land, kill and displace the
9 wildlife, birdlife, endangered plants, poison the
10 air, water and wells, and all the people who live
11 nearby? Because runoff will definitely find a way
12 to my well and into Candlewood Lake. It will.

13 What will happen to my property value,
14 to all the property values of everyone who lives
15 there? We are expected to pay full taxes on
16 poisoned land? I'm not going to do that. What
17 about our future generations? My grandchildren, I
18 would never let them near there.

19 What will they say about us and the
20 damage that we have caused and cannot fix? How
21 will vegetation be controlled around these solar
22 panels? With herbicides? We all know that they
23 cause cancer, and haven't we had enough? I
24 watched my husband die of cancer in the house. He
25 was exposed to a lot of herbicides.

1 What gives this company the right to
2 come to a rural neighborhood and build a solar
3 plant with a tax abatement that ends up paying so
4 little in taxes? Over 20 years, that hardly makes
5 any difference at all. Instead, the taxpayers of
6 New Milford, all of us will pay for this and
7 they're being paid -- to be sick. And the
8 herbicides really scare me.

9 But anyway, once this company leaves who
10 cleans up their mess? What responsibility will
11 they take for all the illness that comes as a
12 result of using chemicals and herbicides? And you
13 know they will. They have to control the growth
14 of vegetation.

15 Who will pay my medical bills? Will
16 they do that? Will they pay my medical bills if I
17 get sick? Okay. Are they going to pay for me to
18 have a new well drilled if all of the runoff comes
19 into my well? My neighbor's well?

20 We must protect this fragile
21 environment. We must say no. Destroying the
22 delicate ecosystem is a heavy, heavy price to pay.
23 Candlewood Lake is right there, so how do you stop
24 runoff? Things just have a way of being a
25 disaster.

1 Do we want Candlewood Lake poisoned as
2 well? Because in some way it will find its way in
3 there. Water has a way of moving around.

4 I want my neighbors to fare well. That
5 means all of them, those that live in my
6 neighborhood and beyond, and those who also live
7 in the forest.

8 My neighbors in the forest have no voice
9 to say or speak, why did you destroy my home? But
10 I will speak for them and plead with you to say no
11 to this project that endangers so many with no
12 benefit whatsoever to the residents of New
13 Milford.

14 There's plenty of open land available.
15 Let them go to these places. I welcome solar
16 energy. I want solar energy, but I don't want to
17 destroy the land in an irresponsible way to get
18 it.

19 So money is important, but there's a lot
20 of things that you can't replace with money like
21 lives and health. So that's all I really have to
22 say.

23 Thank you.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Liba Furhman.

25 LIBA FURHMAN: Good evening, and thank

1 you to the members of the Siting Council and staff
2 for coming here to New Milford again. I know
3 you've been here before many times.

4 For the record my name is Liba Fuhman.
5 I'm a former mayor of New Milford, a former member
6 of the planning commission, ad hoc member of the
7 zoning commission. I was the chairman of the
8 Housatonic Regional Planning Agency and of the
9 Housatonic region's economic development
10 partnership and I've also held leadership roles at
11 several regional conservation nonprofit
12 organizations, including Weantinoge Land Trust and
13 the Housatonic Valley Association. And over the
14 years I've been the chairperson of a number of
15 grassroots coalitions working to protect New
16 Milford's environment.

17 I believe in the process of government
18 and I believe in the process of citizen
19 participation. I believe that this Siting Council
20 will make the right decision in this case. When
21 all the testimony is provided and the balance of
22 the environment versus energy need is measured,
23 the environment in Candlewood Mountain will win.

24 In 1999 the Siting Council proved that
25 the process works with its unanimous decision

1 denying Sempra Energy's proposal to site a
2 500-megawatt combined cycle gas-fueled energy
3 cogeneration plant on a site that was not suitable
4 for the utility.

5 When the Siting Council heard the
6 testimony and the expert witnesses of area
7 residents they made the right decision for New
8 Milford. The Siting Council said, based on the
9 record in this proceeding we find that the
10 cumulative effects associated with the
11 construction, operation and maintenance of the
12 electric generating facility at the proposed site,
13 including effects on the natural environment,
14 ecological integrity and balance, public welfare,
15 scenic and recreational values, forest and parks,
16 area water and wildlife are significant in
17 conflict with the policies of the State concerning
18 such effects and they are sufficient reason to
19 deny the proposed project.

20 The Town of New Milford, as you well
21 know, is already doing its part in providing
22 energy. We're home to two hydroelectric plants,
23 Bull's Bridge and Rocky River producing 8.4 and
24 29 megawatts respectively. We have two
25 co-generating plants, Kimberly-Clark's 35 megawatt

1 gas cogeneration plant, and Waste Management's
2 3.3-megawatt methane plant.

3 I'd like the Siting Council to consider
4 a number of questions. The State of Connecticut
5 has invested millions of dollars in this town over
6 the decades from purchasing development rights for
7 farms and forests to Lover's Leap State Park.
8 Isn't it anti -- I can't say the word. I can type
9 it -- antithetical to now be converting core
10 forests into powerplants even if they are solar?
11 Isn't that one reason why the State Legislature
12 passed Public Act Number 17218?

13 Has the applicant proved due diligence
14 by presenting and assessing alternative sites that
15 might not have the environmental impact this
16 proposal does? Has the applicant considered
17 brownfield sites, not only in New Milford, but
18 throughout Connecticut and in Massachusetts where
19 the power is going to go because of their power
20 purchase agreement?

21 Since they will be paying \$450,000
22 annually to lease the project property, or
23 9 million over the 20-year life of the project, I
24 think they could certainly afford to look at other
25 properties.

1 DEEP's comments of September 21st State
2 that DEEP did not select Candlewood Solar as one
3 of the projects authorized to enter into a
4 long-term purchase power agreement, however the
5 Commonwealth of Massachusetts is another
6 participant in the tri-state RFP process and did
7 elect the project. So why did the State of
8 Connecticut pass on this project? Are those
9 reasons part of this record? And if they're not,
10 shouldn't they be?

11 Will the Siting Council be asking for a
12 GIS based viewshed analysis that will show the
13 true impacts, true visual impacts of the plant?
14 To my knowledge no such science-based analysis is
15 in the record.

16 I ask the Siting Council to enter New
17 Milford's 2010 plan of conservation and
18 development into the record as it directly
19 contradicts the planning commission's letter to
20 you which says the proposal is not in
21 contravention with the POCD. The POCD lists
22 Candlewood Mountain as a resource to be protected,
23 as a natural diversity area, an area to encourage
24 preservation abutting the zoned Candlewood Lake
25 area for water protection.

1 I know you will hear from a great many
2 people this evening on both sides of the issue,
3 and I thank you for your time, patience and
4 consideration at all comments.

5 And if you would just please indulge me
6 one moment, I do have an e-mail that was sent and
7 I've been asked to read it into the record by
8 Representative William Buckbee who is our state
9 representative for the 67th district. There's
10 three lines.

11 Please attach my name to the sentiments
12 expressed by my good friend and colleague
13 Representative Richard Smith. I could not have
14 written a better statement myself. I agree with
15 him wholeheartedly. I also want to state that I
16 support the research of such projects, their
17 benefits and challenges.

18 It's important to have all facts and
19 then make a firm decision. I like the idea of
20 clean solar energy, but I don't believe this is
21 the right place for it at this time.

22 William Buckbee.

23 Thank you very much.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I'm not sure.
25 Is it William -- is it Carter? Or something close

1 to that?

2 WILLIAM CARTER: Good evening. My name
3 is William Carter. I live on Lookout Ridge Road
4 just past Candlelight Farm. And my location is
5 usually downwind of the proposed solar site.

6 I'm concerned about what no one else has
7 been discussing the sounds that might be audible
8 from eight massive inverters, and most importantly
9 the risk of fire from this massive electrical
10 system.

11 The plan is to clearcut the site and to
12 plant grasses as groundcover. We happen to get
13 droughts periodically around here, and dry grass
14 burns very easily and quickly. I live beyond the
15 entry to the site and Candlewood Mountain Road is
16 my only road in and out. We are told this project
17 will be invisible to us and most other observers.

18 Who is going to report a small fire? No
19 one. It will only be when it gets so large that
20 we might take notice. Are our local volunteer
21 fire departments equipped with all they need to
22 fight a fire at a huge electrical complex?

23 They are miles away. Their worst
24 nightmare will be an out of control wildfire on an
25 89-acre sloping mountaintop in a fenced in

1 electrical plant.

2 There are many online reports of fires
3 involving photovoltaic systems, PV systems. Here
4 are excerpts from a long report called,
5 understanding the fire hazards of photovoltaic
6 systems by Allianz Global Corporate and Specialty,
7 Allianz Risk Consulting.

8 PV -- I printed this from the Internet.
9 PV systems are subject to electrical faults like
10 any other electrical installation such as arc
11 faults, short circuits, ground faults and reversed
12 currents.

13 Any electric installation is exposed to
14 the risk of arcs, and you probably already know
15 this, but solar installations are particularly
16 sensitive to this exposure because of the high
17 continuous DC current that exceeds 10 amps and
18 very high voltages, 300 to a thousand volts.

19 DC arcs do not self extinguish and can
20 reach temperatures as high as 5400 degrees
21 Fahrenheit. Arcs of this temperature can melt
22 metal which can fall as slag and ignite nearby
23 combustible materials.

24 PV fire incidents have resulted from
25 defective soldering, loose connections, ground

1 faults, insulation faults, aging and corrosion of
2 the material as well as insulation failures
3 between two wires due to animals chewing on them,
4 ultraviolet breakdown and brittle cracking,
5 moisture ingress, and freeze/thrust cycles, all of
6 which can result in arcing.

7 And Candlewood Mountain is a high
8 elevation. We get a lot of cold weather. We get
9 a lot of rain. We get a lot of animals that eat
10 wires. Considering the operating life of a PV
11 system the true fire incidence rate may not become
12 apparent for some time. Furthermore, typical PV
13 systems with hundreds and even thousands of
14 connectors increases the probability of faults
15 occurring.

16 And relating this to a project of 75,000
17 solar panels, there are probably millions of
18 wiring connections. So the odds are pretty good
19 there will be failures. The developers will say,
20 PV projects are safe. Most of the time that may
21 be correct, but the Internet is full of reports of
22 PV fires. So what is the truth about this?

23 We have been promised a lot, but I have
24 learned that where money is involved there is the
25 real truth, and then there's the reason or an

1 argument that sounds good. They stand to make a
2 lot of money. So I'm pretty sure we're getting
3 the propaganda that sounds good.

4 They convinced the New Milford Town
5 Council to buy into the sound-good stuff, and they
6 want the Siting Council to buy into it as well. I
7 hope you're as skeptical of this project as I am.

8 On another note, in reading on the
9 Internet and in knowing that this power is going
10 to go to Massachusetts, I tried to investigate
11 what the Massachusetts siting guidelines might
12 look like. And from what I can understand, their
13 government documents discourage clearcutting of
14 trees.

15 They also call for sufficient liability
16 insurance, proper bonding and fire safety plans.
17 Are we being offered all this by this developer?
18 Massachusetts probably would not approve of this
19 site, so why should Connecticut?

20 Thank you for your time.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Steve Kleppin.

22 STEVE KLEPPIN: Good evening. My name
23 is Steve Kleppin. I chair of the Town's farmland
24 and forest preservation committee. Our name is a
25 little bit of a misnomer because we are not

1 necessarily charged with making sure forestland is
2 preserved, or kept. Per definition in statute
3 forestland really is a resource, so that's the
4 perspective where we take this from.

5 We were approached by the applicant in
6 this case back in the fall of 2016. They sought
7 our support on their proposal. We as a committee
8 are an advisory committee. We don't set policy.
9 We don't rule on applications in any way.

10 As I said, they sought our support. We
11 reviewed their materials and had several
12 discussions with them. And instead of offering a
13 letter of support, what we did was reach several
14 findings related to what their proposal was. They
15 indicated to us that what they were going to do in
16 terms of installation of the panels themselves
17 would result in very minimal earth disturbance.

18 There would be no removal of soil
19 material. There would not be clearcutting of --
20 well, the trees would be removed in the areas
21 proposed for the panels, but there would be no
22 removal of stumps. So the underlying soils which
23 is really -- gives the value to the farmland,
24 would not be disturbed.

25 Subsequently, we learned that their

1 application indicated that it was not necessarily
2 the case. And if that is so, the committee met
3 and decided that it would be contrary to what we
4 had previously discussed with them and we would be
5 in opposition of their proposal.

6 I just wanted to reiterate we did not
7 offer any letter of support to the applicant. We
8 said we would not oppose the application had they
9 taken certain steps, many of which were spoken
10 about earlier in terms of offering land to the
11 land trust, which would be our preference in any
12 kind of endeavor involving farmland.

13 Also, they talked about off-site
14 mitigation in terms of assisting local farmers or
15 working with some -- one of the other sites in
16 town. And there were several measures they
17 included and -- or at least thought they would
18 consider. And it turns out that's possibly not
19 the case, and if so then we would not be in
20 support of the application, and would be in
21 opposition to their proposal.

22 Thank you.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Julie Bailey.

24 JULIE BAILEY: I'm Julie Bailey. I live
25 in New Milford. I was a member of farmland

1 preservation during the time of which we saved
2 four family farms that are now working farms for
3 people, and will continue to be so, and have been
4 involved in a number of environmental endeavors in
5 this town to seek the kind of town that we really
6 want.

7 No one in this room, and no one in this
8 town is against solar energy. It's the right
9 technology, but in this case it's very much in the
10 wrong spot. I happen to live probably 12 or
11 13 miles from this site. It does not affect me
12 visually, but it affects me as a member of the
13 town and I stand here in solidarity with everybody
14 in both towns who will be affected by this.

15 The New Milford plan of conservation, as
16 Liba said earlier, has a number of goals and among
17 those and one of the most important is to protect
18 our natural resources. Candlewood Mountain is
19 specifically mentioned on page 35 as one of those
20 natural resources that we should endeavor to
21 protect.

22 It's an iconic mountain and it's
23 mentioned as an important site because of all that
24 it represents in terms of animal life and in terms
25 of wildlife and in terms of trees. It's also

1 listed in the National Diversity Database. So why
2 would Ameresco pick the top of a mountain that's
3 visible from two communities and take down
4 70 acres of trees, 15,000 trees? One word,
5 because it's cheap.

6 It's a piece of land that's held by a
7 bank and it's cheap and it's easy to do. And the
8 ancillary damage that that would do and the effect
9 on people and places in our town is of no
10 importance to them.

11 Why, I ask again, would they take a site
12 like that when in Connecticut there are so many
13 brownfield sites that would be available to do
14 something like that?

15 Today I had a conversation with Mark
16 Lewis who is the coordinator at DEEP of
17 brownfields in Connecticut, and he told me that
18 there are over 500 brownfield sites in the state,
19 several of which would be appropriate for a solar
20 panel installation of this size, and they're
21 cheap.

22 And some of them no doubt are close to
23 electrical grids so that that energy can be sent
24 directly, as we all know, to Massachusetts. And
25 they're probably distant from residential

1 neighborhoods and away from other towns' beloved
2 and iconic natural resources.

3 In fact, among them is something that
4 represents a trend of solar panel installations
5 being placed on landfills. And today there are
6 already twelve of them in Connecticut, including
7 one in Bridgeport and one in Hartford.

8 There are brownfield sites, again all
9 over this state and we have one and we have other
10 areas in our town that would be appropriate for
11 something like this. Why would we do something on
12 the top of a mountain?

13 Finally, he said to me today, siting
14 solar arrays on brownfield sites helps prevent
15 sprawl of the worst possible kind on undeveloped
16 sites, especially -- and I'm adding this
17 sentence -- when it's an iconic and beloved
18 natural resource for all of us in this generation
19 and the generation of our children to come.

20 Thank you very much.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: I believe the next one is
22 Eric Shields.

23 ERIC SHIELDS: My name is Eric Shields.
24 I moved to New Milford in 1967 and I just wanted
25 to make three points.

1 According to the studies that the
2 developer made it will have minimal environmental
3 impact. We'll see significant tax revenue for the
4 Town of New Milford from this project, and at the
5 end of the project they will remove the solar
6 panels and allow the land to go back to its
7 natural state.

8 So I think those are all things that
9 people are always saying throughout the years, not
10 in my backyard. Not in my neighborhood. We like
11 it, but put it somewhere else. This is something
12 that it has to go somewhere and it has to go in
13 somebody's -- near somebody's backyard. So it,
14 having virtually no impact, the project should
15 stand on its own.

16 Thank you.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

18 Devon Dobson.

19 DEVON DOBSON: Hello all and welcome,
20 Siting Council to this beautiful town of New
21 Milford. My name is Devon Dobson, and I am a
22 longtime resident of New Milford.

23 I stand before you here this evening to
24 ask if you'll please vote against the proposed
25 plan put forth by Ameresco Solar to destroy over

1 72 acres of our forests.

2 A side note. One thing I thought about
3 today, do any of you know the mascot of New
4 Milford? It's the New Milford Green Wave. It
5 makes no sense. There's no oceans around here.
6 So the green wave was thought up decades ago and
7 it's the view over the hills of the rolling green
8 mountains.

9 I'm a proud New Milford High School
10 graduate. My biggest concern -- not my biggest --
11 one of my biggest -- not even my biggest is that
12 the mascot, were going to be the New Milford solar
13 panels, and that's terrible. That sound terrible.
14 We just cannot be the solar panels. But in all
15 seriousness, I just want to talk about the beauty.

16 I did grow up on Candlewood Mountain
17 Road. I'm sure some of you, hopefully all of you
18 were able to see some of the beautiful, beautiful
19 woodlands that are there today.

20 The forests on Candlewood Mountain
21 contains all the elements that make the
22 Connecticut countryside and Woodlands so
23 appealing. It's full of majestic hundred-year-old
24 oak, maple and birch trees. It is old stone walls
25 all throughout the forest constructed by the

1 farmers in the 1700s.

2 There are beautiful streams full of all
3 sorts of wildlife. Some of these streams feed
4 nearby Candlewood Lake. Others feed the many
5 ponds located on the surrounding properties.

6 There is an extensive trail system which
7 hikers from all over utilize both during the
8 summer and during the winter. These trails also
9 connect with the Blue Mountain trail, which is
10 found atop Candlewood Mountain and is a very well
11 hiked trail.

12 In the forest there are fields of
13 wildflowers and tall grass. There are large
14 sculpted rocks. There is, of course, an abundance
15 of wildlife, deer, bobcats, black bears, of course
16 squirrels, all types of birds, fish, and a
17 beautiful family of bald eagles which I saw just
18 last year.

19 The thought of this beautiful forest
20 being clearcut for solar panels is sickening.
21 Just last weekend I took a drive up New York State
22 Route 22. There is an abundance, literally
23 thousands of acres of vacant farmland that has not
24 been used for decades. Put the solar panels
25 there. Put them in the Old Century Brass Mill

1 location. Put them in Massachusetts, just not
2 atop the pristine Candlewood Mountain Road.

3 Thank you very much for your time.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

5 Thomas Burrell.

6 THOMAS BURRELL: Thank you, Council, for
7 this opportunity to speak. My name is Thomas
8 Burrell and I live with my beloved Lilia on 5
9 Acorn Lane on the mountain. We enjoy our lives
10 and the beauty that we're starting to call our
11 home, an American dream.

12 I know a little about solar panels as
13 I've worked in the semiconductor world for over 30
14 years and also as a safety environmental manager
15 in that industry.

16 In around 25 years, or sooner, solar
17 panels will become useless, these. The fed and
18 the state governments are not the fastest to
19 implement regulations and impose mandates on
20 disposing or recycling these hazardous waste
21 products.

22 I know it's sad because their products
23 are lead, chromium, cadmium and other chemicals
24 which could potentially leak into your ground,
25 your water tables and the lake, not to mention the

1 panels could get placed into the lake.

2 Twenty-five years of potential contamination.

3 I'm not saying it's going to happen, but
4 let me tell you a similar story, a true one. My
5 brother worked all his life to own a farm in
6 Hopewell Junction, New York. A company above the
7 mountain disposed of chemicals called
8 tetra-trichloroethylene into the ground. It
9 wasn't supposed to happen. It was not going to
10 happen. Well, it leaked into the water tables.

11 My brother lost his house, his animals.
12 His wife got cancer. His -- him, he could not
13 have children. We lost the next generation of
14 family. He lost his house. The neighbors lost
15 their property. And the legal clout, they said,
16 it ain't going to happen. You ain't going to get
17 anything.

18 So his American dream was destroyed.
19 I'm new here. Very new. I'm a newbie. I look to
20 have that American dream here with Lilia. One
21 family dream was destroyed by a company. Don't
22 ruin our dream.

23 Please vote no.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

25 Monte Robson.

1 MONTE ROBSON: Good evening. My name is
2 Monte Robson. I'm a nearly 60-year resident of
3 Connecticut, the majority of which has been in New
4 Milford.

5 I understand this hearing will be on a
6 petition from Candlewood Solar for a declaratory
7 ruling that no certificate of environmental
8 compatibility and public need is required for the
9 proposed solar voltaic facility.

10 This petition should raise alarm bells.
11 What are they trying to hide? Or are they so
12 incompetent that they put the cart before the
13 horse in their contract negotiating and don't have
14 the time for the studies to be completed?

15 Regarding the public need, the U.S.
16 Energy Information Administration says in their
17 latest state profile Connecticut was a net
18 electricity recipient in the past, but total net
19 generation typically exceeded retail sales in
20 recent years, and the state has been a net
21 provider of electricity to other states since
22 2009.

23 Regarding environmental compatibility,
24 I'm a strong supporter of solar and other forms of
25 renewable energy. We need to stop extracting and

1 burning fossil fuel, but as with most issues there
2 are tradeoffs and everything is connected. In our
3 blind rush for progress and economic growth we've
4 forgotten that we are animals, that we require a
5 healthy biosphere to provide clean air to breathe,
6 clean water to drink and all of our food. We are
7 in the midst of the sixth mass extinction caused
8 this time by our actions.

9 This proposed solar facility will
10 destroy much forest and habitat for diverse
11 wildlife. The trees remove atmospheric carbon
12 dioxide and store it, so their removal will be a
13 step backward in the fight against climate
14 disruption.

15 The World Wildlife Fund director general
16 wrote in 2014, this latest edition of the living
17 planet report is not for the faint hearted. One
18 key point that jumps out and captures the overall
19 picture is that the living planet index which
20 measures more than 10,000 representative
21 populations of mammals, birds, reptiles,
22 amphibians, and fish has declined by 52 percent
23 since 1970.

24 Put another way, in less than two human
25 generations population sizes of vertebrate species

1 have dropped by half. These are the living forms
2 that constitute the fabric of ecosystems which
3 sustain life on earth. The barometer of what we
4 are doing to our own planet, our only home, we
5 ignore their decline at our peril.

6 A recent paper in the proceedings of the
7 National Academy of Sciences said, we find that
8 the rate of population loss in terrestrial
9 vertebrates is extremely high, even in species of
10 low concern.

11 I have attached copies of both these
12 papers to my handout. I hope Candlewood Solar can
13 find another site in New Milford, possibly a
14 brownfield like Century Brass.

15 Thank you.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

17 I'm not sure. David Zaggetti.

18 (No response.)

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Graham Russell.

20 GRAHAM RUSSELL: Hi, my name is Graham
21 Russell and I have been a tenant at Candlelight
22 Farms Airport for the last twelve years. I
23 currently live in the northwest corner of
24 Connecticut. I've currently got a house that's
25 under contract, ready to be sold.

1 And for the last twelve years I've
2 invested in Candlelight Farms Airport, with a huge
3 desire to live in the area. I turned on Bullymuck
4 Road, Hubbell Mountain Road and I feel like I'm
5 home. With the potential of this solar plant
6 going in I'm now concerned about my investment in
7 the area. I'm not saying that I'm not going to
8 invest in the area, but I am concerned about it.
9 I don't know what it's going to do to my
10 investment or how it's going to impact my buying a
11 house in this area.

12 Thank you.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

14 Kathleen Roberts.

15 KATHLEEN ROBERTS: Hello, and much of
16 what I feel and many of my concerns have already
17 been stated tonight, so I just wanted to ask you
18 to please vote no.

19 I think we've only heard from people who
20 are for it who feel that they may benefit from it
21 personally in a financial way. Those of us who
22 live here I think are mostly concerned about the
23 diversity of wildlife that will be impacted, and
24 also just our neighborhoods in general.

25 One other thing that I'd like to add

1 that hasn't been brought up is destroying this
2 kind of core forest will impact the larger animals
3 that prey on smaller things like mice. And there
4 are many studies that show that this kind of
5 destruction has led an explosion of white-footed
6 mice, which are one of the major carriers of Lyme
7 disease. Many of my neighbors have had it. My
8 son has had it, and it's just one more thing to
9 add to your consideration.

10 Thank you.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

12 Walter Bayer.

13 WALTER BAYER: Walter Bayer, and I'm
14 speaking as an individual. I heard the comment
15 about the New Milford Town Council. I happen to
16 be a member of the New Milford Town Council and I
17 stand before you absolutely opposed to this
18 project.

19 Why? Why build it? Ameresco is
20 obviously a large institution. They have
21 subsidiaries. I want to know who's going to take
22 care of the problem if something happens to Lake
23 Candlewood? Who's going to be responsible for the
24 liability to take care of the problem if there's a
25 glitch with the solar panels?

1 I want to know who's going to take care
2 of the airport if a plane coming in or a plane
3 going out has an accident, who's going to be
4 responsible, because something happened to the
5 solar panels? It was already mentioned previously
6 that a variety, a myriad of things can happen to
7 all these electrical connections, whether
8 weather-related, whatever the case may be.

9 What's going to happen to the
10 Connecticut Blue Trail? If you're not aware of
11 it, there is a Connecticut Blue Trail up there, a
12 walk trail. What's going to be the impact on the
13 environment? What's going to be the impact on
14 wildlife habitats? Who's going to fix Candlewood
15 Mountain Road when you've got all those lumbering
16 trucks lumbering up and down Candlewood Road?
17 They're going to tear it apart.

18 Again I ask the question, what about
19 liability? It's my understanding that Ameresco,
20 which is the giant octopus with all the tentacles
21 out there, will not be responsible. It will be
22 one of those tentacles that has limited liability.

23 And frankly, I can't see butchering a
24 pristine mountain top. I've lived on that
25 mountain for 43 years. I'll probably be one of

1 the ancient burials when they dig it, whatever the
2 case may be.

3 Tax rebate, absolutely opposed to the
4 tax rebate. We gave Ameresco a 55 percent tax
5 rebate. Outrageous. To me, that's outrageous. I
6 go down to pay my taxes. Can you give me a
7 rebate? What are you talking about, old man?

8 Energy, new Milford will not benefit
9 from any of the energy coming off of that grid.
10 It goes into the grid. It goes out to
11 Massachusetts. In 20 years we will realize only
12 \$2.7 million, while Ameresco will be raking in a
13 rather huge sum of money per year, close to
14 \$500,000.

15 And I have not seen a plan -- after 20
16 years when it's decommissioned who's going to take
17 care of it? Is Ameresco going to walk away and
18 say, ha, we have got our money? New Milford, you
19 clean up the mess. I have seen no plan in dealing
20 with decommission.

21 By the way, I'm an old man. Rockefeller
22 of New York, when they tore down the Palisades
23 people asked him, well, what should we do with the
24 Palisades over across the river there?

25 You know what he said? Plant trees.

1 You know why? Because trees are scrubbers. You
2 want clean energy, there's your clean energy.
3 They are scrubbers.

4 Thank you.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: John Chesler.

6 JONATHAN CHESLER: Thank you, ladies and
7 gentlemen. My name is Jonathan Chesler.

8 Dear members of the Siting Council, I am
9 very nervous. It seems like there's a lot
10 of people here present, all the notice signs and
11 flyers plastered all over town and put in
12 mailboxes in the last few days. And it looks like
13 more than one or two trees were sacrificed in the
14 process of doing that. I do hope when it's all
15 over that taking them down, the same energy will
16 go into taking them down as went into putting them
17 up.

18 I'm a full-time year-round resident of
19 Candlewood Mountain. I volunteer for land
20 conservancies, worked in a native plant
21 nursery and worked for several environmental NGOs,
22 both in the United States and abroad. I've
23 represented the United States in a youth
24 leadership event in the runup to the top 15 in
25 Copenhagen in 2009. And I've even been arrested

1 for sitting in the scoop of a bulldozer in the
2 attempt to prevent irresponsible development. In
3 short, I feel I have strong environmental
4 credentials.

5 I've also been to several meetings
6 regarding this project in the past year. I
7 deplore the unnecessary cutting down of trees, and
8 as such I see three ways of protecting the
9 79 acres in question. The easiest would be for an
10 environmental organization such as the Nature
11 Conservancy, Audubon, or even Rescue Candlewood
12 Mountain to purchase the land and make it a
13 sanctuary, this parcel in question and the others
14 on the mountain, which are all privately owned.

15 This is the now impossible way -- which
16 would be, if not to assault it and change the
17 zoning in the first place, which leads to the
18 long-term, difficult, but best path on the ground
19 which is to support this project.

20 Fossil fuels are no longer a viable way
21 to a sustainable planet. As such, New Milford
22 rightfully withdrew a proposal for a gas-fired
23 powerplant last year. I think it's the
24 responsibility of New Milford to find ways to both
25 reduce the demand for power and source it

1 renewably, and this project can be part of that
2 solution.

3 The project has the unique siting
4 advantage of being within a mile of the grid node,
5 reducing the amount of cutting another site would
6 require in order to reach this or another node.

7 What many of the opponents may not have
8 been aware of is the fivefold increase in tax
9 revenues to the Town that the project brings over
10 its current use with no increased demand for town
11 services. Further, the solar panel array is
12 reversible and while many people think it will be
13 permanent, increases in technology and the
14 reduction of efficacy of the over time mean that
15 at some point it will be changed or
16 decommissioned.

17 Also little known or acknowledged is
18 that the property is currently owned by Wells
19 Fargo and is designated as a major planned
20 residential development district. The property is
21 not owned by a land trust or a conservation entity
22 in any way. It is slated for development. Again,
23 it is slated for development.

24 As such, as a full-time New Milford
25 resident, I would much rather see a development

1 project that can be removed with permeable
2 services under the structures rather than one that
3 cannot be removed such as block after block of
4 50-foot tall residences, a total of 500 units and
5 all the concomitant driveways, sidewalks, and
6 pavements which current zoning allows for.

7 Further, the payment in lieu of
8 taxes for a pilot agreement has a provision for
9 voluntary switching of the zoning to R-80, which
10 would not allow for the type of development
11 permissible as it stands today. Given the tax
12 benefits to the Town, the reduction of the
13 ecological footprint and the lengths that Ameresco
14 plans to go to given testimony to the committee,
15 which I looked at online today, I'm in strong
16 support of this project.

17 Thank you all for your time.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

19 Amanda Locke.

20 AMANDA LOCKE: My name is Amanda Locke.
21 I'm a homeowner and a full-time resident living on
22 Candlewood Mountain Road. I'm also a State of
23 Connecticut certified forester employed to manage
24 forests to protect water quality for the country's
25 largest unfiltered water supply. I would like to

1 voice my strong support for this project.

2 In the interests of time this is an
3 abbreviated version of my comments. I will
4 provide full comments to the Siting Council
5 through the written submission process.

6 The development of alternative energy
7 sources is vitally important to our ability to
8 reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and combat
9 climate change. I've read through much of the
10 documentation available on the Siting Council's
11 website for this project and it's apparent that
12 the petitioner has performed and continues to
13 perform substantial reviews of the potential
14 environmental, cultural and social impacts of the
15 project.

16 Understandably, many people are
17 concerned with the tree clearing required for this
18 project, 68.5 acres for the array and 43.5 acres
19 for the interconnection. I think it's important
20 to remember that this project would be virtually
21 invisible from Candlewood Mountain Road and
22 Candlewood Lake.

23 Also for some perspective on the forest,
24 the area to be cleared is composed primarily of
25 mixed oak species of approximately 80 to 90 years

1 in age. Connecticut's land use history of
2 colonial agriculture and subsequent abandonment
3 combined with surficial geology make this an
4 extremely common forest condition and type across
5 the state. This is neither a rare habitat type,
6 nor an old growth stage forest that would require
7 special protections to preserve unique landscape
8 qualities.

9 Obviously, wildlife that currently
10 occupies the area proposed for clearing will be
11 affected by the project. The available habitat
12 would change from closed canopy forest to
13 seasonally maintained field. The site would no
14 longer be suitable for many of the species
15 currently present, however the site would not be
16 devoid of wildlife habitat.

17 It would instead offer habitat for a
18 different suite of species, those dependent on
19 early successional conditions that are more rare
20 in our suburban patchwork of houses and laws
21 interspersed with middle-aged forest.

22 I also think it's important to keep the
23 necessary clearing in perspective. If the energy
24 produced by the proposed project were instead
25 produced by a fossil fuel powered generation

1 facility it would take 22,000 acres of forest to
2 absorb the resulting greenhouse gas pollution. It
3 seems to me that the tradeoff between 72.8 acres
4 cleared to avoid pollution requiring 22,000 acres
5 to absorb is a reasonable one.

6 I do have two concerns with the project.
7 The first is the potential for introduction and
8 spread of invasive species with the increased
9 light available on the site after clearing. I
10 think it would be appropriate to require an
11 invasive species monitoring and control plan to
12 ensure invasive species are not allowed to gain a
13 foothold where they have been previously absent.

14 My second concern is with the zoning of
15 the parcel and future development. In my mind is
16 a neighbor, this project, which would require
17 virtually no town services and create almost no
18 noise or traffic after construction is infinitely
19 preferable to the zoned use as a major planned
20 residential development district, which could be
21 developed with buildings as tall as five stories.

22 It is my understanding that the pilot
23 with the Town allows a voluntary zone change to
24 R-80 and that there have been talks about
25 establishing a permanent conservation easement on

1 the undeveloped portion of the parcel. If it is
2 within the Siting Council's purview, I would ask
3 that you consider requiring a firm commitment from
4 the developer to the zone change and conservation
5 easement as a condition of any declaratory ruling.

6 To conclude, the reduction of human
7 induced greenhouse gas emissions is the critical
8 environmental issue of our times. Projects like
9 this must be built if we are to successfully
10 combat global climate change and secure a
11 habitable place for our children and
12 grandchildren.

13 In the immortal words of Hillel the
14 Elder, if not us, then who? If not now, then
15 when?

16 Thank you very much.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

18 Next one I believe is Eli Noam.

19 ELI NOAM: My name Eli Noam. I live on
20 346 Kent Road in New Milford, Route 7.

21 Ladies and gentlemen of the Connecticut
22 Siting Council, thank you for listening to our
23 concerns. I am a business school professor and
24 economist. I believe in economic development.
25 Early in my career I was a public service

1 commissioner for the State of New York in Albany.
2 We dealt with energy and promoted alternative
3 energy. I chaired a lot of public hearings in
4 towns where most of the town was hopping mad at one
5 utility or another. I sat through hearings
6 with nimby sentiment, but ladies and gentlemen
7 sometimes these people are dead right.

8 Sometimes they have the voice of reason,
9 of common sense, of decency, of community, of
10 leaving their world a better place so their
11 children have a balance against longterm profit
12 maximizers and their high-priced lawyers.

13 So one thing we encountered was, in New
14 York was that a lot of applicants would try to
15 dress up industrial projects with some green
16 elements in order to make them look better. They
17 did this even on the nuclear powerplant shore.

18 Now you will remember, by the looks of
19 it, the Vietnam War. Okay. One general famously
20 declared --

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Thanks for the
22 complement.

23 ELI NOAM: It comes with wisdom.

24 One general famously declared, we had to
25 destroy this village in order to save it. So this

1 is happening here, too. We have to destroy this
2 forest in order to save the environment.

3 Now secondly, because the environmental
4 issue has been discussed let me kind of address
5 the public safety issue. We cannot create a
6 safety hazard at the airport. As far as I can
7 tell, this is the only accessible airport in the
8 entire Litchfield County. If you permit this
9 project you practically guarantee, ladies and
10 gentlemen, you practically guarantee accidents and
11 endanger pilots, passengers and people on the
12 ground.

13 A month ago a plane crashed at that
14 airport. An experienced flight instructor died.
15 A young woman was severely injured, as was her
16 father. As a result, our Senators, Senator
17 Richard Blumenthal wrote a scathing, harsh letter
18 to the FAA in Washington and demanded that the
19 safety of private aviation be as strictly assured
20 as those of commercial aviation.

21 Our own senator said that, and yet three
22 weeks later we have to sit here and justify it to
23 another Connecticut public body that it should not
24 endanger private pilots and those on the ground.
25 Does one hand know what the other is doing?

1 The proponents of this project claim
2 that the FAA finds no problem with solar panels.
3 This is not correct. There are three documents on
4 the record that you distributed around, three FAA
5 documents. One is just a methodology of how to
6 measure glare.

7 The second one actually said right in
8 the front on a kind of pop-up window that it
9 actually has been withdrawn for further study. So
10 it's inoperative. So somebody must have had
11 second thoughts about what they said.

12 In the third document there is a study,
13 so let me read to you from it.

14 While solar power panels provide useful
15 needs to generate revenue and to provide energy
16 locally, they do pose a potential hazard to pilots
17 in the form of glare.

18 For example, at the Manchester Boston
19 Regional Airport air traffic controllers report
20 significant problems seeing due to glare
21 reflecting from the solar panels and towards the
22 tower.

23 Aside from the Manchester Boston
24 Regional ATCs suffering from solar glare Reports
25 from pilots flying near the Ivanpah solar electric

1 generating system have included complaints about
2 the glare from the facility. Pilots have
3 described the glare as, quote, blinding, unquote.
4 And at least one individual reported to the FAA
5 that the glare was, quote, like looking into the
6 sun, unquote, and that they thought the glare was
7 a hazard because they could not see the traffic
8 nearby.

9 The effect, it says here in the FAA
10 report, of a solar panel can produce a sudden
11 increase, a flash of light, et cetera, et cetera.
12 I could go on, but it is in your record.

13 And so I would like to conclude, this is
14 an industrial project in terms of its
15 environmental and safety dimensions. A real pig
16 and you cannot make a pig look better by putting
17 green lipstick on it.

18 So ladies and gentlemen of the Siting
19 Council, I hope that you will protect the future
20 of this town. Save lives and stop this ill
21 advised project.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Dee Calvey.

23 DEE CALVEY: A lot has been said and I
24 thought you might need an extra voice tonight. It
25 doesn't seem like you do, but I was a Pratt Center

1 educator and I learned that even a rotted tree
2 contained ecosystems of many plants and animals
3 and insects and birds -- and 15,000 trees, when we
4 already have the polluted brass area or
5 brownfields of Connecticut.

6 Please, where are the animals supposed
7 to go? It's not just an environmental issue.
8 It's, you know, you say new things will move in.
9 Well, where is the old animal supposed to go? And
10 the trees, and the birds?

11 So thank you. That's all I have to say.

12 And as an artist the beauty of our
13 hills, you've got to leave them alone. Thank you.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

15 Jason Kushner.

16 JASON KUSHNER: Jason Kushner. I thank
17 you very much for the opportunity to speak in
18 front of you today. I'm speaking in full favor
19 and support of the project.

20 One point I want to reinforce which
21 several individuals have brought to light is this
22 current piece of land is zoned for a major planned
23 development. Now in my opinion, having everyone
24 come forth saying, not in my backyard and, you
25 know, I'm going to see it -- half the people are

1 going to see it. Half aren't, but what would it
2 look like if there's 500 units in a five-story
3 building? I think that mountain would look like a
4 Christmas tree. I don't know.

5 A couple other points I wanted to hit
6 home on is there's been some minimization of this
7 \$2.7 million in tax increases, of which there's
8 absolutely no additional services that will need
9 be to be provided by the Town.

10 Now we can turn our noses up at
11 \$2.7 million, but to me that's a heck of a lot of
12 new employees, of new opportunities for new
13 teachers, new town officials, new town employees
14 to be hired and provide additional value to
15 citizens, not even including the relief on taxes
16 for personal property that this would allow the
17 town's citizens.

18 Also I want to hit home on the fact --
19 it's already been brought to light a couple times,
20 but when this project is completed the idea here
21 is to return it to its natural habitat. This
22 mountain was clearcut in the last 100 years and,
23 you know, our generation really needs to have a
24 focus on finding ways to have clean energy. And
25 there's a state mandate out there, 20 percent of

1 energy needs to be a renewable, clean energy
2 sources. I think we're at, you know, less than
3 10 percent of that.

4 You know, something needs to get done.
5 We need to make an effort to find clean, renewable
6 energy sources and this is a great opportunity and
7 a location where no one is going to see it. I
8 just think this is a great opportunity for a town
9 like New Milford, and it has my full support.

10 A VOICE: Can I ask a --

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

12 No, you cannot.

13 I really would appreciate people to show
14 the respect just as people have shown you the
15 respect. Thank you.

16 David Kellogg.

17 DAVID KELLOGG: I'm David Kellogg. I
18 live on Lookout Ridge Road. I've tried very hard
19 to wrap my arms around the reasons that the town
20 council embraced this project from the beginning
21 and I just wrote down a few facts that I
22 considered.

23 Over 70 acres of wooded farmland will be
24 clearcut. Over 15,000 trees will be cut to
25 accommodate some 75,000 solar panels. Whatever

1 power these panels generate goes to the New
2 England Northeast ISO power grid. In other words,
3 not to the benefit of New Milford.

4 After the price New Milford is paying in
5 tax abatements, our power will be no cheaper and
6 permanent jobs won't be a part of the equation.
7 This project is not replacing an environmentally
8 obnoxious powerplant to the benefit of the
9 surrounding area. They are dramatically altering
10 beautiful farmland while at the same time removing
11 over 15,000 trees.

12 This solar field, supposedly the largest
13 of its kind in the state of Connecticut, doesn't
14 even show up on the radar screen in terms of the
15 power it generates for the grid, which we all know
16 goes to Massachusetts. Doesn't it seem kind of
17 crazy to go to all this trouble, financial
18 sacrifice and effort to install a solar field in a
19 part of the country where there are clear skies
20 less than a third of the year?

21 It does appear the only ones benefiting
22 from this entire project is Ameresco and not the
23 Town of New Milford.

24 Finally, the only reason I can see
25 anyone supporting this project is because it's a

1 green energy project. Who wouldn't after all?
2 Can anyone not want to save the environment? Only
3 with this you're destroying an environment to save
4 the environment, and it's not supposed to work
5 that way.

6 Thank you.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Lisa -- I don't know
8 whether is Hieda or Hida.

9 LISA HIDA: Hello my name is Lisa Hida.
10 Thank you, Connecticut Siting Council, for giving
11 me the opportunity to speak about this particular
12 project. I'll try to be additive to the comments
13 that have already been made.

14 I and my husband have lived in New
15 Milford for the past 20 years and when we were
16 transferred by DuPont into Connecticut 20 years
17 ago we chose a 45-minute one-way commute living in
18 New Milford for its village green, big white
19 churches and its abundance of open farmland.

20 Interestingly enough last fall when
21 Panda Power proposed a 550 megawatt co-gen
22 facility within two miles of our house I had the
23 opportunity to talk to a number of young families
24 with small children who had lived and moved to New
25 Milford in the past five years. So current

1 newbies, as somebody said earlier.

2 They were shocked because they had moved
3 here for the exact same reason. I don't know if
4 you know, but as a town we're struggling with --
5 and we talk very frequently about attracting young
6 families, increasing our tax base. So this
7 project could potentially go against that because
8 of the environmental impact.

9 Again, through last fall's awakening of
10 myself regarding the Panda Power project, I've
11 have the opportunity, not just to talk to families
12 about their perspective on that particular
13 facility, but also I had the chance to meet up
14 with some of the environmental experts we have
15 locally who have fought this battle before with
16 Sempra.

17 And I am amazed and humbled by the depth
18 of knowledge I think my community has about the
19 environmental impacts, and they're pretty
20 realistic about that. So although I live ten
21 miles away as the crow flies from this project,
22 when my neighbors are concerned I stand with them
23 as part of their community and listen to them.

24 A couple of things that haven't been
25 mentioned -- again to try to be additive. My

1 perspective is not one of not in my backyard, but
2 this is the wrong site. People have spoken about
3 Century Brass. Let me just give you a little bit
4 more on that topic. So the argument against
5 Century Brass is that it's not the same buildable
6 acreage, so it's not a good site.

7 However, there's a 140 acre parcel for
8 sale adjacent to that property. I have a hard
9 time believing they couldn't find ten buildable
10 acres that would not impact the environment as
11 we're proposing and not have to cut the core
12 growth forest. So I think there are other sites
13 in town that should be considered, number one.

14 Number two, the tax benefit. The number
15 I've seen is actually \$100,000 a year for 20 years
16 payment in lieu of taxes. So present value, a
17 little bit less than \$2 million to the taxpayers
18 of New Milford in the form of tax relief and
19 increased tax revenues.

20 However, if you do the calculation on
21 the investment level required for this sized
22 facility, the tax revenue should be more in the
23 name or the range of \$500,000 per year. So this
24 is not a great deal for the taxpayers. If we were
25 to move it to a different location we might be

1 The question is, where? I came this afternoon to
2 the hearing because I was very interested to hear
3 what Ameresco had to say. Here's my takeaway.

4 I was actually sort of shocked that I
5 thought that their proposal seemed to be very
6 hastily pushed through. There were many questions
7 that were asked about the impact on wildlife, and
8 especially on the endangered species, especially
9 during the important spring season. They had no
10 information on that. They weren't even thinking
11 about this in the spring. And they are not
12 planning on providing information about it because
13 you have to make a decision by the end of the
14 year.

15 And when asked why it was so hasty they
16 said, lease terms. To which I think, well, why
17 are you getting involved in a lease where you
18 don't have the time to really do the proper
19 preliminary work that needs to be done?

20 My interest here is actually in
21 Candlewood Lake. I think Candlewood Lake is a
22 wonderful local resource and to clearcut the 70,
23 80 acres, whatever, at the top of the mountain
24 only, I think, 730 feet from the lake is, to me, a
25 potential problem. I was interested to hear if it

1 was addressed. It wasn't, but to me runoff is an
2 issue.

3 Now you did ask a question about whether
4 they were going to use herbicides or pesticides on
5 their property and they said, who? Us? Oh my
6 God, no. We would never do that kind of thing.
7 We believe in mowing.

8 And I think, yes, that sounds very nice
9 and they're going to have -- they're going to mow
10 for the six months and then there's going to be
11 some invasive species that I heard somebody, you
12 know, discuss.

13 And there are the sprays that are going
14 to come out. The sprays will certainly invade the
15 wells of the people who live nearby, but it will
16 also invade Candlewood Lake and I would call your
17 attention to the fact that Lynn Deming Park, the
18 New Milford town park with a lovely beach that
19 everybody here swims in all summer is directly
20 across from Candlewood Mountain and will be the
21 primary endpoint of all of the herbicides that
22 they certainly will never even think of using.

23 Lastly, we live in a time of extreme
24 weather, a lot of which we have had occasion to
25 see in the last couple of weeks. This extreme

1 weather is only going to get worse. It strikes me
2 the vast clearcutting of forest is only going to
3 have disastrous consequences for the future.

4 There is no erosion control device that
5 is as good as a forest, especially a mountaintop
6 forest. I think that they were discussing various
7 man-made drainage conduits, some small things they
8 said that could go under roads and things. I can
9 only imagine that it's going to take one, you
10 know, large storm and we're going to see that
11 little man-made conduits are just not going to do
12 the trick and there's going to be extensive
13 flooding. And my guess is that Ameresco is not
14 going to pay for any of the damage to the people
15 who live on the bottom of Candlewood Mountain
16 Road.

17 So I believe that solar energy is a good
18 thing, just like probably most everybody in the
19 room. The question is the location, and I just
20 believe that an alternate site should be found.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

22 Debra is it -- Schueler?

23 DEBRA SCHUELER: You all must be very
24 tired right now.

25 My name is Debra Schueler. And I'd like

1 to thank the Siting Council for doing such a
2 thorough examination of the pros and the cons on
3 deforesting Candlewood mountaintop.

4 I believe in solar power, but aren't
5 there better places? How about our landfill.
6 Isn't that ready to take that energy and transport
7 it, you know?

8 And then if any of you are lovers of
9 nature, you already know the benefits of keeping
10 forests and wetlands. And animals traverse on the
11 tops of mountains and -- the larger animals, and
12 so it's going to be very sad to see those animals
13 in our backyards. And we all wonder why we have
14 bears in our backyards. We seem to be so
15 astounded. We're going to have bears in our
16 backyard and all the other animals who are trying
17 to find places to go.

18 Someone has not mentioned this, but I
19 would kindly request that a traffic study be
20 completed at the base of Route 37 and Candlewood
21 Mountain Road. I have lived there for 40 years.
22 It's a very, very dangerous intersection and I
23 can't imagine what it's going to be like with
24 logging trucks in that area. I don't know. That
25 has not been addressed as far as I know.

1 And in addition to that, that mountain
2 is a very steep mountain to get up. And in my
3 twenties when my husband and I used to boat -- and
4 we'd have to trailer a boat up that mountain and
5 it was hard getting a big Jeep Grand Wagoneer with
6 that boat up there. And I'm wondering what it's
7 going to be like with those logging trucks getting
8 up there and down, and the noise factor that
9 carries so easily.

10 Someone of authority mentioned that
11 generally when solar farms go up chemical agents
12 such as Agent Orange are applied. I know we've
13 talked about this tonight, but I agree with
14 Janet's point. I'm thinking down the road that
15 they're going to find that two-year mowing is not
16 sufficient, and that chemicals would have to be
17 applied because weed whacking just would not take
18 care of it. Forests continue to grow and
19 encroach.

20 And basically I feel that it's just too
21 close to the lake and I'm not going to repeat
22 other things. I so appreciate your time. I know
23 you're all very tired from a long day, and I
24 oppose this, and hope you will listen to all of us
25 who do oppose it.

1 Thank you so much.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

3 Tom -- V-R-B-A, I mean, I'm not sure.

4 TOM VRBA: Hello. My name is Tom Vrba.

5 I live on 141 Candlewood Mountain Road. The solar
6 farm, it would not be directly in my backyard, but
7 it's probably about a third of a mile as the crow
8 flies away from where I live.

9 Just a little fun fact about this. I
10 have no financial interest in this project
11 whatsoever. I've had Lyme disease a bunch of
12 times, and just a reference to what one of my
13 neighbors said -- but Lyme disease is easy to get.

14 Anyways, I support this project. There
15 might need to be some tweaks done. Okay? There
16 might be, you know, certain things that need to be
17 done to make it a little bit better, but overall
18 this is a well-designed project. I've seen some
19 of the plans for this. They're going to build
20 around the vernal pools so that, you know, so the
21 salamanders and the frogs can mate properly in the
22 springtime. They're not going to be building in
23 the wetlands.

24 The project is relatively well
25 camouflaged from Candlewood Mountain Road and it's

1 relatively well camouflaged from Route 7. It's
2 going to be quiet. There's probably going to be
3 something like two months of development and then
4 it's going to be very quiet for the most part.

5 Okay?

6 Yeah, sure. There might be a tiny bit
7 of buzzing as you get near where the project is,
8 but I think overall it's going to be relatively
9 quiet. I see it as a work of art, honestly. I
10 think it has the potential to be very, very
11 beautiful.

12 Now people have commented that the solar
13 panels might shoot down planes like if they had
14 laser beams on them, or something like that. I
15 will defer to the FAA on that. If the FAA
16 approves of the project then, you know, then let
17 the FAA decide whether or not. I'm not a
18 specialist. If the FAA decides they think there's
19 something wrong with it and something needs to be
20 done to improve that, then let the FAA decide.

21 As best as I can tell, you know, from
22 what I've heard about this place there's no black
23 footed ferrets running around up there. You
24 know -- let's see.

25 Overall it's, as I said, I think it's a

1 good project. Maybe make some tweaks. I mean,
2 some people have made some really good suggestions
3 here.

4 And other than that, my main comment
5 would be -- my other concern is, again not a
6 financial concern. It's this is not a state park.
7 This is not Nature Conservancy property. This is
8 not my property. Okay?

9 I don't own this, this land and I'm a
10 little bit concerned about telling other -- I'm
11 not about to tell my neighbors that they can't put
12 an addition onto their house. I'm not going to
13 tell them they can't have a loud party once in a
14 while. I'm not about to tell them that they can't
15 build on the lot. To me, it's a matter of
16 letting -- to me it's a matter of this is not my
17 land.

18 If this was a toxic waste dump, if this
19 was a garbage dump or a junkyard or a coal-fired
20 powerplant spewing ash into the air and making my
21 asthma worse and making everybody's asthma worse,
22 that would be a problem. But this solar plant
23 will help shut down more coal-fired plants, and I
24 think that's a good thing.

25 And so those are my two main comments.

1 I think the people, the neighbors, my neighbors, I
2 think they need to be careful what they wish for
3 when they overly regulate property. Those are my
4 comments.

5 Thank you.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

7 Michael J. -- is it Midner?

8 (No response.)

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Michael -- is it Pachaug?
10 P-a-c-h-a-u-g.

11 MICHAEL PATZIG: Thank you so much for
12 spelling my name. It's actually Patzig.

13 Thank you all for giving me an
14 opportunity here to speak for a moment. I
15 appreciate your time. There's been some projects
16 on this development that have already been shot
17 down. This is just another project. If this does
18 not pass, the future project of any five-story
19 buildings or residential property can also be shut
20 down.

21 This is a pristine piece of land. We
22 have beautiful trees up there. This is a property
23 that my son and I went hiking through. This is a
24 property where I tied little flashlights on the
25 kids in the neighborhood's heads as we went

1 searching for rocks and frogs. This is something
2 that needs to be conserved.

3 One main point that I would like to
4 bring up at this point is you've noticed everybody
5 in this room has done their research on the
6 Internet prior to coming here. From my
7 understanding, it is your civic duty to protect
8 the environment. Please think on what your
9 decision is and how it will affect the future for
10 the next town meeting when somebody decides that
11 it's a good idea for a company to come in and
12 clearcut trees for the sake of profit. They will
13 research the Internet and find this case and your
14 decision.

15 So I beg you, do the right thing. Trees
16 for solar panels makes no sense. There's lots of
17 other places.

18 Thank you very much.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Laura Nigro.

20 LAURA NIGRO: Hello my name is
21 Laura Nigro. I actually traveled here from
22 Simsbury, Connecticut. As you know, the Siting
23 Council was recently in Simsbury and I appreciate
24 the opportunity to speak here. I am a party in
25 the Simsbury action because similarly it's putting

1 a large solar utility in my residential community.

2 And I'm here because I'm speaking to the
3 Council, not as a party in this action, but to say
4 that we've got a larger issue. This is not just a
5 Candlewood issue. It's not just a Simsbury issue.
6 It's a Connecticut issue, and we have a
7 significant burden that Connecticut is being asked
8 to bear with five sites of the eleven sites that
9 were selected by Massachusetts to be placed here
10 in Connecticut.

11 And the Siting Council has a tremendous
12 responsibility because it sits in your hands,
13 unlike Massachusetts where the decisions are left
14 at the local level and where brownfields are
15 preferred sites. We have no such laws, however
16 the Siting Council is not without power.

17 The Siting Council statutes allow you to
18 look at the laws of other states. If those are
19 just to look at local zoning, then let's look at
20 Massachusetts local zoning, the powers put in
21 local Massachusetts zoning to look to prefer brown
22 sites. I hear repeatedly -- it's as if I'm
23 sitting in Simsbury in Eno Hall with repeatedly
24 people saying, I'm not against solar. Neither am
25 I.

1 I'm not against the placement. Neither
2 am I. I am against putting this in an area where
3 we're trading green for green. We're trading good
4 for another good, and how can that be right? And
5 it sits in your hands to make this very powerful
6 decision for all of these citizens, not just in
7 Simsbury, not just here in Candlewood, but in
8 three other sites in Connecticut.

9 It's hundreds and hundreds of acres of
10 farmland of woods, and these are all good things
11 that should be preserved. There are ways to go
12 about this in a more productive way.

13 I was very encouraged that I saw Esty's
14 letter that was signed to Attorney Bachman. And I
15 think it was also Blumenthal, because I had been
16 begging them, begging them to weigh in on this and
17 for them to say that they support solar projects,
18 which is echoed throughout this room and was
19 echoed throughout Simsbury. They support it, but
20 they don't know that it's appropriate because of
21 the environmental impact.

22 There are impacts on our waterways.
23 There's impact on our land. There's environmental
24 impacts. This should not be pushed through in a
25 declaratory judgment. This has to be given a lot

1 of thought. This isn't a small three-megawatt
2 facility. This is a significant facility. In
3 Simsbury it's over 110,000 panels. How can this
4 be right. We rest this in your hands and hope you
5 guys do the right decision.

6 Thank you.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Rabbi Harry Rosenberg.

8 A VOICE: Oh, I'm sorry. He had to
9 leave to pick up his daughter.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Rick -- Beobide?

11 RICK BEOBIDE: My name is Rick Beobide.
12 I think really the comment that I want to make is
13 we could all come up with our own statistics and I
14 feel -- is anybody here a homeowner?

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Excuse me, sir. Sir?
16 Sir? Just address your comments to the Siting
17 Council, please. Thank you.

18 RICK BEOBIDE: Okay. We could all come
19 up with our own statistics. We can come up in
20 favor, pro or con, and we'd all feel pretty
21 comfortable with it, whatever we come up with.

22 But I think really the problem here is
23 we have available places that this can go and
24 putting it here seems to be a little difficult, is
25 the way I see it. I just feel as though -- I vote

1 no on this, by the way. I just feel as though --
2 we're talking about neighbors. I mean, if we go
3 to Massachusetts we have neighbors in
4 Massachusetts. They need help -- I'm a little
5 nervous -- with electricity.

6 The point is, they have need, but to
7 supply that need do we have to use our own solid
8 resources here that are already green in order to
9 provide that? And I don't see the sense of that.
10 I know that's already been said, but I think, you
11 know, for the people who are making this proposal
12 I think it's a matter of loving your neighbor.

13 To provide an understanding for the
14 place that you're going to build on, there's
15 people that lived there. We have needs. We
16 bought properties here, and these are our
17 investments. And this is going to impact our
18 investment in an already green place, which is
19 what we moved into with the intent of moving here.

20 And I just think that when you have
21 these other possibilities to build something that
22 will work somewhere else, it just doesn't make
23 sense to me personally that we should move on this
24 the way we're proposing. So that's all I'm going
25 to say.

1 Thank you.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

3 Thank you. That concludes the list.
4 The Council will now close the public comment
5 portion of the hearing.

6 There are several people who are listed
7 as witnesses representing, so they get their
8 chance. They're represented -- which I'm about to
9 state -- we'll continue the evidentiary portion of
10 the hearing in New Britain on Tuesday,
11 October 31st, 2017, at 11 a.m.

12 Please note that anyone who has not
13 become a party or intervener, but who desires to
14 make his or her views known to the Council may
15 file written statements with the Council until the
16 record closes. Copies of the transcript of this
17 hearing will be filed at the New Milford,
18 Brookfield and New Fairfield Town Clerks' offices.

19 I hereby declare this hearing adjourned.
20 Thank you all for your participation and exit and
21 drive home safely.

22
23 (Whereupon, the above proceedings were
24 concluded at 8:22 p.m.)
25

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing 87 pages are a complete and accurate computer-aided transcription of my original verbatim notes taken of the Public Hearing in 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, which was held before ROBIN STEIN, Chairman, at the E. Paul Martin Room, Roger Sherman Town Hall, 10 Main Street, New Milford, Connecticut, September 26, 2017.



Robert G. Dixon, CVR-M 857
Notary Public
BCT Reporting, LLC
PO Box 1774
Bristol, Connecticut 06011
My Commission Expires: 6/30/2020