

January 23, 2019

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL AND FIRST CLASS MAIL

Melanie A. Bachman, Esq.
Acting Executive Director
Connecticut Siting Council
10 Franklin Square
New Britain, CT 06051

RE: ***Petition No. 1352*** – Nutmeg Solar, LLC, petition for a declaratory ruling, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §4-176 and §16-50k, for the proposed construction, maintenance and operation of a 19.6-megawatt AC solar photovoltaic electric generating facility on approximately 162 acres comprised of 9 separate parcels located generally south of Bailey Road and east of Route 191 (Broad Brook Road), and associated electrical interconnection to Eversource Energy’s Scitico Substation at 20 Bailey Road in Enfield, Connecticut

Dear Ms. Bachman:

I am writing on behalf of Nutmeg Solar, LLC (“Nutmeg Solar” or the “Petitioner”) in response to the January 16, 2019 comments provided by the Enfield Town Council (the “Town”) regarding Nutmeg Solar’s petition for a declaratory ruling by the Connecticut Siting Council (the “Siting Council”) that no certificate of environmental compatibility and public need is required for the above-referenced proposed solar project (the “Project”).

Importantly, the Town states that it supports the Project. In addition, the Town raises several suggestions and concerns that are addressed below.

Buffer/Vegetation

The Town requests that the Petitioner:

- a) Use a significant percentage of model pollinator plants;
- b) Add visual screening along Broad Brook Road;
- c) Create a plan to manage invasive species; and
- d) Create a plan to maintain the frontage along Broad Brook Road in accordance with the Town’s Property Maintenance Ordinance.

- a) The Petitioner has proposed to install tiered landscaping to establish a dense and diverse visual buffer to the Project in locations along the Project’s western boundary. Plantings are also proposed in certain areas where grading will occur in the critical terrestrial habitat of the vernal

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pool. The proposed plantings are composed of the species listed in Table 1 below, with pollinator-friendly species noted. Based on the plan, a majority, 54%, of the proposed plantings are considered pollinator-friendly. While actual plantings may deviate from this percentage based on plant availability, this plan ensures a significant percentage of pollinator-friendly species will be present while achieving proper project screening.

Table 1: Nutmeg Solar Proposed Landscaping

| Tier | Common Name (Botanical Name) | Quantity ⁽¹⁾ | Pollinator-Friendly? ⁽²⁾ |
|---|--|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Vegetative Screening | | | |
| Tier 1 | Purple Coneflower (Echinacea Purpurea) | 164 | Yes |
| | Cardinal Flower (Lobelia Cardinalis) | 164 | Yes |
| | Scarlet Beebalm (Monarda Didyma) | 164 | Yes |
| | Largeflower Tickseed (Coreopsis Grandiflora) | 164 | |
| | Black-eyed Susan (Rudbeckia Hirta) | 164 | Yes |
| Tier 2 | Coastal Sweet Pepperbush (Clethra Alnifolia) | 102 | Yes |
| | Black Chokeberry (Aronia Melanocarpa) | 102 | |
| | Winterberry (Ilex Verticillata) | 102 | |
| Tier 3 | Eastern Red Cedar (Juniperus Virginiana) | 104 | |
| | Common Juniper (Juniperus Communis) | 104 | |
| Proposed Vegetation in Road Grading Area | | | |
| Tier 2 | Coastal Sweet Pepperbush (Clethra Alnifolia) | 271 | Yes |
| | Black Chokeberry (Aronia Melanocarpa) | 271 | |
| | Winterberry (Ilex Verticillata) | 271 | |
| | Highbush Blueberry (Vaccinium Corymbosum) | 271 | Yes |
| Total Plantings | | 2,417 | |
| Total Pollinator Friendly Plantings | | 1,300 | |
| Total Pollinator-Friendly Plantings % | | 54% | |

1) Exact quantities and each species are subject to change based on availability at the time of procurement.

2) Sources: New England Wildflower Society; United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service; University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension

b) The Petitioner has proposed to install approximately 1,570 feet of vegetative screening where the Project will be visible from abutting residences and does not believe additional screening beyond the current plan should be required. The screening plan has been modified in response to feedback from the Town received in December 2018,¹ resulting in denser vegetation screening by reducing the spacing of proposed Tier 2 shrub plantings and increasing the size

¹ See December 17, 2018 Meeting Minutes, available at:
https://www.enfieldct.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/_01072019-3362.

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of evergreen trees at time of planting. In addition, approximately 3,798 feet of wide-mesh agricultural fencing (as opposed to chain link fencing) is proposed along the Project's western boundary, including the entire length of the Project's frontage along Broad Brook Road (see Figure 7 of Exhibit A of the Petition).

- c) As part of the Project's operation and maintenance activities, the Petitioner will monitor and manage invasive plants at the site. The Petitioner proposes to reseed disturbed areas with a native, low growing, meadow seed mix. Once established, the vegetation will be maintained in a meadow condition by mowing, and herbicides would only be used in an environmentally responsible manner by utilizing a spot treatment application method to control invasive plants or woody vegetation, as necessary. Invasive plant species known to occur at the site include Asian bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), Morrow's honeysuckle (*Lonicera morrowii*), and rambler rose (*Rosa multiflora*). These invasive species occur in isolated areas, specifically in the southwestern corner of the site. In order to prevent existing and potential invasive species from spreading and becoming established, the operations and maintenance team will monitor the Project site carefully and utilize spot-treatment of herbicides as needed.
- d) The Petitioner either directly or in coordination with the landowner, will ensure proper maintenance of vegetation in the area between the Project fence and Broad Brook Road.

Well Water Protection

The Town requests that the Siting Council include a provision that the Petitioner safeguard well water related to the potential use of pesticides and herbicides. As noted in the Operation & Maintenance Plan provided as Exhibit H to the Petition, the primary means of vegetation management will be mowing. The Petitioner may use herbicides for limited spot treatments as a secondary means of vegetation control where necessary. All applications will be targeted at specific problematic species (e.g., invasive and woody plants) in discrete locations within the Project site; broadcast aerial application of herbicides is not proposed. It is important to note that the current property owners routinely broadcast pesticides and herbicides as part of their tobacco cultivation practices. As such, if approved, the Project will likely decrease the use of pesticides and herbicides on the Project site.

Drainage

The Town requests that the Siting Council include safeguards for proper drainage. The Petitioner has prepared a comprehensive stormwater analysis for the site, and has developed plans for the management of stormwater during the construction period and post-construction for the life of the Project. The Project has received approval from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection in accordance with the General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater Associated with Construction Activities, in response to a construction-period Stormwater Pollution Control Plan developed by the Petitioner. The post-construction Stormwater Management Report submitted with the Petition in Exhibit K demonstrates that the proposed permanent stormwater measures installed will manage stormwater on site such that the rate and volume of stormwater does not increase compared to existing conditions. The Petitioner will maintain the permanent stormwater management measures for the life of the Project.

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Noise

- a) The Town requests that construction work be limited to Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and exclude weekends entirely due to the residential nature of the neighborhood. The neighborhood's current land use is varied, and includes not only residential, but also commercial and industrial uses, including a ready mix concrete supplier and a heavy equipment repair facility and storage area. The Town's proposed construction hour limitations could potentially increase the Project's construction timeline by months, therefore, prolonging exposure to construction noise for residents living near the Project site. In addition, this increase in construction schedule could impact the Petitioner's achievement of key Project milestones, including commercial operations, and significantly increase construction costs. However, in recognition of the Town's noise concerns, the Petitioner proposes to limit pile driving construction activities to the hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- b) The Town Council also requests the use of auger piles, in an effort to lower the decibel level during construction. Pile driving is industry standard practice for installation of racking posts and the Petitioner believes it remains the best method of post installation for this Project based on engineering experience and specific site conditions. The Petitioner does not believe the use of auger piles is warranted for this Project as they are most useful on sites with challenging subsurface conditions (which have not been identified by the Petitioner at this Project site). Auger piles are typically employed only when more economical driven piles are not feasible for the reasons identified above. In addition, in the Petitioner's experience, installation of auger piles and the associated racking solution requires significantly more time, which would result in neighboring residents' exposure to a prolonged construction schedule. Lastly, the Petitioner's proposed limitation on pile driving hours stated above should serve to address this noise concern.

Thank you for your anticipated consideration. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding this correspondence.

Sincerely,



David W. Bogan

DWB

cc: Service List