



COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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Executive Director

September 25, 2019

Melanie Bachman, Executive Director
Connecticut Siting Council
Ten Franklin Square
New Britain, CT 06051

RE: PETITION NO. 1380 – Petition of LSE Delphinus LLC (“Lodestar Energy”) for a Declaratory Ruling That No Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need is Required for the Construction, Operation, and Maintenance of a 1.992 MW AC Solar Photovoltaic Facility in Enfield, Connecticut.

Dear Ms. Bachman:

The Council on Environmental Quality (“the Council”) has reviewed the Petition for Declaratory Ruling noted above and offers the following comments for consideration by the Connecticut Siting Council.

1. State Listed Species

Preliminary indications from The Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDB) of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) show the possibility of State Listed Species on the site. The NDDB Preliminary Assessment for Powder Hill Road Solar Located at 22 Powder Hill Road in Enfield (Assessment No.: 201908914) indicated that “there are known extant populations of State Listed Species known that occur within or close to the boundaries of this property”.

Further, the letter (September 5, 2019) indicated that in order to “prevent impacts to State-listed species, field surveys of the site should be performed by a qualified biologist when these target species are identifiable”. Deferral of a decision regarding the proposed project would be appropriate until the Petitioner is able to complete a field survey for State-listed species and, if needed, identify the appropriate mitigations for the site.

2. Visibility

Information in the Petition warrants a review of the claim in the Petition that “there will be no visual impact of the Project to the surrounding area”.

The Petitioner states that the “Project is located approximately one hundred (100)

feet east of Powder Hill Road and is separated from Powder Hill Road by a row of large-growth trees with canopy heights of approximately fifty (50) to seventy (70) feet, none of which are proposed to be removed as part of the Project.” The site plan found in Exhibit 2, sheet 4 of 6 depicts a revised tree line between Powder Hill Road and the proposed project that includes the removal of vegetation. In consideration of this revision, confirmation regarding the true extent of tree clearing and the possible effect on the actual visibility of the project is recommended.

Similarly, the Petition states that “within one (1) year of the completion of construction of the Project, it is the Site Owner’s intent to terminate any gravel operations at the Site”. Presumably, gravel operations will continue in the interim on the 14.56 acres remaining on the site. This raises the question of how the new landscape will affect the visibility of the solar panels from outside the site.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. Please do not hesitate to contact the Council if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peter Hearn". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Peter Hearn
Executive Director