

Judy Perkins DeLorenzo

September 1, 2025

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DEAR MORRIS RESIDENTS

One of our fellow Morris residents wrote and sent to the CT Siting Council the following detailed, well researched explanation of the concerns regarding the huge solar panel farm proposal in our town. Please understand there is no benefit at all to the town – no tax revenue, no funds, no electricity. On the contrary there are risks involved. Our right to the quiet enjoyment of our property, our property values, our health and safety as well as the health and safety of the wildlife and environment (including our wells!) could be jeopardized.

It is well worth the read. Please consider also writing to the siting council. TODAY IS THE DEADLINE TO SEND INDIVIDUAL PUBLIC COMMENTS regarding this project because the vote is soon. It may also be worth sending comments to the EPA, DEEP, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and Morris Inland Wetlands.

Question Presented

Whether the Connecticut Siting Council should approve Petition No. 1686, submitted by GreenSkies Clean Energy LLC, for the construction of a large-scale industrial solar facility in Morris, Connecticut, where the proposed site abuts residential property, lies within a designated watershed, occupies prime farmland, and contains habitats of endangered and threatened species.

Brief Answer

The project should be conditionally approved only if all the mitigation measures outlined herein are strictly implemented, monitored, and enforced. These measures include vegetative buffers, setback requirements, stormwater and watershed protections, endangered species surveys, anti-glare technology, noise reduction, health and safety precautions, farmland preservation, environmental justice compliance, traffic and infrastructure management, community engagement, and property value and environmental compensation. If any of these conditions cannot be guaranteed or enforced, the Connecticut Siting Council must deny Petition No. 1686 to protect residential property, public drinking water, endangered species, agricultural land, and community health and safety.

Statement of Facts

Project Location & Notice Deficiencies

GreenSkies Clean Energy LLC proposes to construct an industrial-scale solar facility south of my property. I received only a single notification letter in March 2025, contrary to procedural fairness principles and Connecticut Siting Council guidelines regarding resident notification. My neighbor received a certified notice, but I was otherwise uninformed about public comment opportunities.

Topography, Runoff, and Watershed

The proposed site features a sloped terrain, increasing precipitation runoff toward residential properties and the Wigwam Reservoir watershed. This creates risks for flooding, erosion, and potential contamination. The area is designated as a Watershed Protection Area under Connecticut law (CGS §22a-354a), requiring careful land-use planning and stormwater mitigation.

Residential Impacts

Without mitigation, the facility will directly impact my residence through glare, visual intrusion, noise from inverters, and dust during construction. Property values are at risk, as studies indicate nearby large-scale solar farms may depress values by 3-10% without mitigation (Hoen et al., 2019).

Environmental Impacts

The property is home to multiple endangered and threatened species, including bog turtles, bald eagles, barn owls, bats, monarch butterflies, salamanders, box turtles, and honey bees. Wetlands in this area border adjacent properties and extend into the Town of Bethlehem.

Agricultural Impacts

The site is prime agricultural land. Industrial-scale solar installation may result in soil compaction, loss of topsoil, and reduced long-term productivity. Connecticut law and policy prioritize farmland preservation, including CGS §22-6h and the State Farmland Preservation Program.

Community and Infrastructure

Construction will involve heavy equipment and truck traffic, increasing the risk of road damage, traffic hazards, and safety concerns for residents. Lack of clear communication and engagement creates potential environmental justice issues.

Applicable Law

Federal Law

Endangered Species Act (ESA), 16 U.S.C. §1531 et seq. – Prohibits activities that destroy or adversely modify habitat for federally listed species; requires consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Clean Water Act (CWA), 33 U.S.C. §1251 et seq. – Regulates discharges into navigable waters; requires permits for stormwater and restricts wetland alterations.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. §4321 et seq. – Requires environmental assessment or impact statement for federal actions significantly affecting the environment.

Connecticut Law

Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act, CGS §§22a-36 to 22a-45 – Protects wetlands and watercourses from development or alteration.

Water Quality Standards, CGS §22a-426 – Establishes surface and groundwater quality requirements enforced by DEEP.

Stormwater & Runoff, CGS §22a-430b – Requires best management practices to prevent pollution from stormwater runoff.

Aquifer Protection Act, CGS §22a-354a – Restricts development within designated aquifer and watershed areas.

Connecticut Endangered Species Act – Prohibits harm or habitat destruction for state-listed species.

Farmland Preservation Statutes, CGS §22-6h – Supports conservation of prime agricultural land and restricts industrial conversion without mitigation.

Environmental Justice Guidance (DEEP, 2023) – Requires fair treatment of communities in environmental decision-making.

Analysis

A. Residential and Visual Impacts

Glare and Visual Intrusion: Panels without anti-glare coatings and without vegetative buffers will reduce resident comfort and quality of life.

Noise Pollution: Inverters and construction activities may exceed reasonable noise levels; soundproofing and construction-hour limits are essential.

Property Values: Empirical research indicates negative impacts on residential property values adjacent to large solar projects (Hoen et al., 2019).

B. Watershed and Groundwater Protection

The site's sloped topography increases risk of stormwater runoff, soil erosion, and potential contamination of the Wigwam Reservoir watershed.

Solar panel failure or storm damage can release toxic chemicals (lead, cadmium) into soil and groundwater.

CGS §§22a-426, 22a-430b, 22a-354a require enforceable measures to prevent these risks, including stormwater retention, buffer zones, and post-construction monitoring.

C. Endangered and Threatened Species

Documented species require strict compliance with ESA and CT ESA.

Proposed development without prior Preliminary Habitat Review and Endangered Species Survey risks legal violation and ecosystem damage.

Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) may be required.

D. Health and Safety Risks

Electromagnetic Fields (EMF): Inverters and power lines generate EMF; long-term exposure risk must be minimized.

Panel Fires: Faulty panels can ignite; fire suppression and spacing protocols required.

Chemical Exposure: Damage to panels or inverters may release hazardous materials; monitoring and containment protocols necessary.

E. Agricultural and Farmland Protections

Industrial development reduces productive farmland, compacts soil, and diminishes agricultural output.

Connecticut policy encourages preservation; mitigation includes leaving natural vegetative cover, minimizing grading, and avoiding soil compaction.

F. Environmental Justice Considerations

Inadequate notice and lack of engagement with residents may disproportionately burden the local community.

DEEP's Environmental Justice program requires procedural fairness and meaningful participation, particularly where vulnerable populations may be affected.

G. Traffic and Infrastructure Impacts

Heavy equipment and construction traffic may damage rural roads and create safety hazards.

Traffic management plans must minimize risk to residents and emergency vehicles.

H. Legal Precedent

Connecticut courts and siting councils have conditioned approvals on strict environmental mitigation, or denied projects when endangered species, wetlands, or community impacts were inadequately addressed.

Examples: *In re Application of Guilford Solar, LLC*, 2017 WL 348912 (Conn. Siting Council – approval conditioned on full habitat mitigation), *Save Our Wetlands v. Connecticut Siting Council*, 2015 Conn. Super. LEXIS 1802 (denial based on wetlands destruction).

Requested Mitigation Conditions

Buffers and Visual Protections

Two staggered rows of 10–12 foot high vegetative buffers (trees, shrubs, native plants).

Non-reflective, low-profile fencing.

Strict height limitations for panels and infrastructure.
Minimum 500-foot setback from residential property lines.
Noise and Construction Controls
Silent inverters, soundproof enclosures, daytime-only construction.
Dust suppression, erosion control, and soil restoration post-construction.
Watershed, Stormwater, and Soil Protections
Full stormwater management plan, BMPs compliant with CGS §22a-430b.
No use of harmful pesticides; pollinator-friendly planting and controlled goat grazing.
Independent monitoring of runoff and water quality.
No-cost yearly water-well testing for surrounding homes.
Endangered Species Protections
Preliminary Habitat Review and Endangered Species Survey by DEEP/USFWS.
Development prohibited until survey completed and mitigation plan approved.
HCP implementation if required by federal or state law.
Health & Safety Protections
EMF exposure assessments; panel fire prevention protocols.
Chemical spill containment and emergency response plan.
Agricultural Land Protections
Minimize grading and soil compaction.
Retain natural vegetation and topsoil where possible.
Post-construction soil restoration and habitat rehabilitation.
Environmental Justice and Community Engagement
Quarterly public updates and town hall meetings.
Accessible complaint resolution hotline.
Equitable consideration of resident concerns.
Traffic and Infrastructure Management
Construction traffic plan minimizing rural road damage.
Safety protocols for residents and emergency access.
Monitoring and Enforcement
Independent third-party monitoring for compliance with all mitigation measures.
Annual compliance reports filed with the Council, DEEP, and USFWS.
Enforcement mechanism allowing Council or DEEP to halt operations for non-compliance.
Property Value and Environmental Compensation
GreenSkies Clean Energy LLC must establish a compensation fund to reimburse residents for:
Any measurable decline in property value resulting from the solar facility.
Damage to private property, including destruction or contamination of water wells, landscaping, fencing, or structures.
Costs incurred due to emergency water supply needs if groundwater contamination occurs.
Compensation mechanisms must be transparent, accessible, and reviewed/approved by the Council and DEEP prior to construction.

Conclusion

While renewable energy is a societal priority, it must not compromise residential safety, water quality, farmland, endangered species, or community well-being.

Petition No. 1686 should be approved only if all mitigation measures—including strict environmental protections, monitoring, enforcement, and compensation for property damage or value loss—are fully implemented and enforceable. If GreenSkies Clean Energy LLC cannot guarantee adherence to these protections, the Connecticut Siting Council must deny the project to prevent irreversible harm.

Bibliography

Federal Law

Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. § 1531 et seq.
Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1251 et seq.
National Environmental Policy Act, 42 U.S.C. § 4321 et seq.

Connecticut Law

Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 22a-36–45 (Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act)
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 22a-426 (Water Quality Standards)
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 22a-430b (Stormwater & Runoff)
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 22a-354a (Aquifer Protection Act)
Connecticut Endangered Species Act
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 22-6h (Farmland Preservation Statutes)
Connecticut DEEP Environmental Justice Guidance (2023)

Academic / Scientific Sources

Hoen, B., Wisser, R., Cappers, P., Thayer, M., & Sethi, G. (2019). Property Value Impacts of Large-Scale Solar Projects in the United States. Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

Connecticut DEEP, Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species List.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Critical Habitat Guidance.

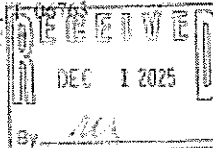
Case Law / Precedent

In re Application of Guilford Solar, LLC, 2017 WL 348912 (Conn. Siting Council)

Save Our Wetlands v. Connecticut Siting Council, 2015 Conn. Super. LEXIS 1802

MORRIS PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
COMMUNITY HALL - 3 EAST STREET - MORRIS, CONNECTICUT

Regular Meeting Morris Town Hall and Live on Zoom
December 4th, 2025 at 7:00 pm
Call in # 1-929-205-6099



<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/80091654083?pwd=estmAm1Q27NamkQWlGcPvbzQmBSc1E>
Meeting ID: 800 9165 4083

Passcode: 572038

Barbara Bongolotti	David Wilg Chairman	
Helen White	Dylan Hovey	Alternates:
Noah Butler	William Ayles Jr. (Vice-Chairman)	Veronica Florio
Douglas Barnes (Secretary)	Erika Leone	Barbara Bongolotti
Kim Dore		Mare Petzold
	Staff: ZEO Tony Adill	
	Planner: Janell Mullen	

Agenda

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Agenda Review
- 3) Old Business
- 4) New Business
 - a) Application for Subdivision # SD 25-03 at 94 Isaiah Smith Lane to Split the Lot into Two Lots.
 - b) Application for Subdivision # SD25-03 at 266 Watertown Road to split the property into Three Lots.
 - c) Discussion for Solar over 1 Megawatt (State Jurisdiction)
 - d) Discussion of how to engage with and get more public involvement
- 5) Complaints
 - a) 376, 378, 380, and 382 Bantam Lake Road
 - b) 191 Island Trail
 - c) 221 South Street
- 6) Other Business
 - a) November 6th Meeting Minutes
- 7) Communications and Bills
 - b) November 19th Meeting Minutes

John Coyne

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In case you want some light reading.....

Solar farm on south street



Lori Kibbe Lindenmuth

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Tonight you can log in from home. New housing bill on the agenda for tonight.

Doreen Gagnon

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By John McKenna: BZ editor and publisher

A solar energy firm based in New York City is proposing to build a large solar energy farm on a 37-acre property at 166 South St. in Morris.

Lodestar Energy will be submitting its plan to the Connecticut Siting Council, which has sole jurisdiction over large-scale solar energy proposals, in July and hopes to begin construction in the spring of 2026, Lodestar solar development associate Sam Valone told the Board of Selectmen during a presentation on Tuesday.

The Siting Council will have 180 days to review the proposal and decide if it should be approved.

The proposed solar energy farm would use 20 of the 37 acres located on the west side of South Street, to the south of Platt Farm Road. The development would be known as the Bina and Abraham Solar Farm.

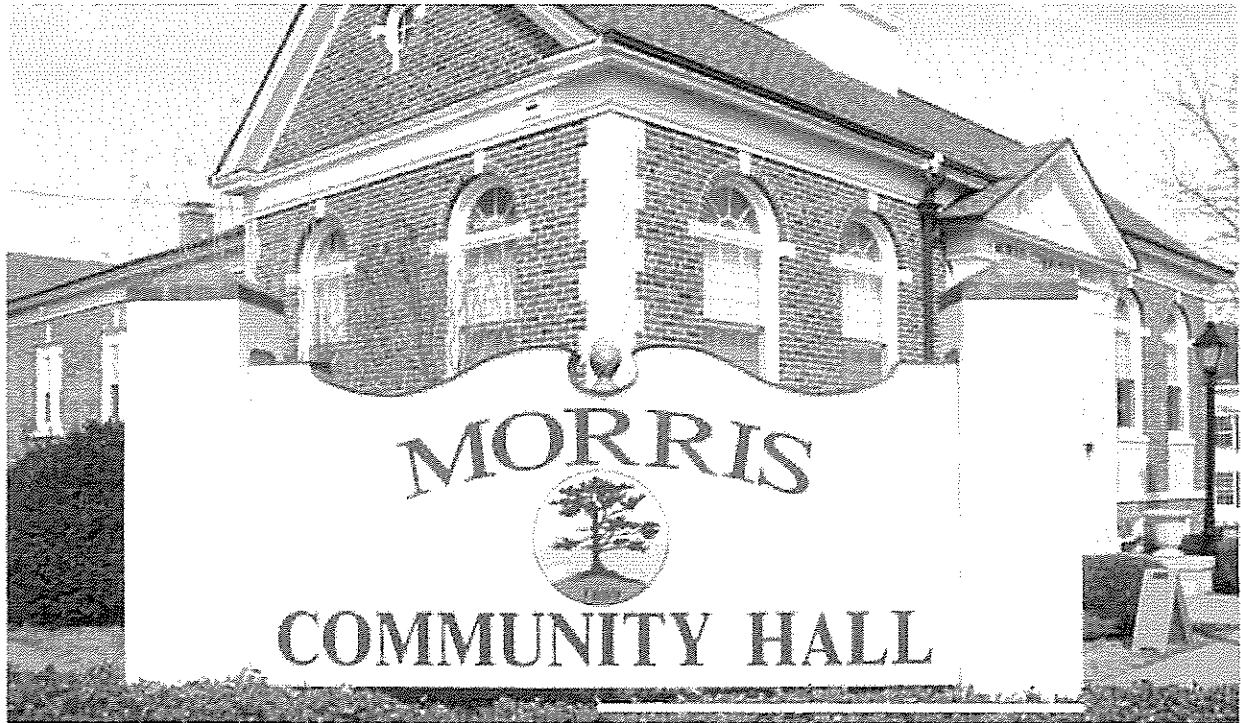
Lodestar would purchase the property from its owners, Leonard Kesten and Linda Bertollette, if the proposal is approved by the Siting Council. Bina and Abraham are names in the family of the owners.

According to Tuesday's presentation, solar arrays would not be visible from South Street and would be surrounded by an 8-foot high fence. Sheep would graze around the arrays to control the growth of grass and weeds.

Energy collected by the arrays would flow into Eversource Energy's reserves.

MORRIS PROPERTY EYED FOR SOLAR ENERGY FARM

Posted by John McKenna | May 23, 2025 | News



You're from Morris, CT if...

Alexander Sideris · SensotdropM68 4h0220m3 fa9059c2h445c9i25i025m,a761rt5645h122 ·
March 9, 2025

Please like this post if you are against a solar farm being added to our town.

Why make use of land that is perfectly fine being empty. Who bright idea was this. I think that all the empty fields in Morris that don't get farmed should remain empty, that way we keep the historic look of town. Until the stewards of the land run out of money and it gets sold to developers who build cookie cutter homes on them.

Wait. That can't be right...

Ted Legendre

March 9, 2025

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I'm not sure if I heard this right. Do we have a possible solar farm in the works.

