

The Town of
Simsbury, Connecticut



Economic Development Commission

July 28, 2017

The Hon. Lisa L. Heavner
First Selectwoman
Town of Simsbury
933 Hopmeadow Street
Simsbury, Connecticut 06070

Re: Town of Simsbury Economic Development Commission response to July 3, 2017
and July 7, 2017 Requests for Board Input.

Dear First Selectwoman Heavner:

On July 13th, 2017, the Town of Simsbury Economic Development Commission (hereinafter referred to as the "EDC") at its regularly scheduled meeting, took up your request of July 3, 2017, which was amended on July 7, 2017, requesting input from all of the Town of Simsbury's Boards and Commissions concerning the Deepwater Wind, LLC's Petition for Declaratory Ruling with the Connecticut Siting Council for the Deepwater 26.5 megawatt solar project (hereinafter referred to as the "Tobacco Valley Solar project"). The Chairwoman of the EDC, Kristen Barnett, recused herself from all consideration of the same, and so the task fell upon myself to run this part of the meeting. The Commissioners present, by Motion, unanimously agreed that members could send their comments to me after the meeting and authorized me to provide you with the EDC's composite response, as the EDC did not believe that, as a body, it had enough information at that time to provide a comprehensive response to your request. The following is therefore the consensus of the EDC regarding the Petition concerning the Tobacco Valley Solar project.

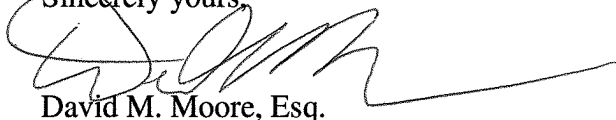
First, while not noticed, I, as acting Chair took the prerogative to invite public comment, as there were two members of the general public who came to the EDC meeting. Both Atty. Laura Nigro and Mr. Joseph Tracy spoke to the significance of the impact of the project to the Town from an economic standpoint and from a personal standpoint. The EDC then began discussion of the project. Mr. James Rabbitt, Director of Planning and Community Development was invited to address the EDC about what the Petition meant and what's the Town's role in the Petition was to be. Director Rabbitt, in response to Commissioners' questions, indicated that there would be tax income generated for the Town, and gave a range of that income. Director Rabbitt also commented on Commissioners' concerns about the use of the affected properties, as well as the response from Deepwater Wind, LLC's response to the citizen response to the Tobacco Valley Solar project regarding visibility and actual impact of the project vis-à-vis traffic.

The general concerns about the Tobacco Valley Solar project, of the EDC as a consensus, was whether the said project was the highest and best use of the affected parcels, yet also being mindful that another use of the parcels would possibly be more housing projects, which the EDC would not favor for parcels within Industrial zoned properties. Additionally, the Commission is concerned about the impact the said project would have

on abutting neighbors and neighborhoods, vis-à-vis property values, environmental concerns and having to look at the actual panel arrays day in and day out, given that most property owners would not have reasonably anticipated having a solar array or farm next door when they bought their properties. The EDC was also interested in the income generated for the Town by way of property taxes and personal property taxes, as the taxes on most, if not all, of the parcels would be significantly higher, with one forecast being a net tax gain of approximately \$575,000.00 for the Town.

In speaking to the actual request by Deepwater Wind, LLC, to have a Declaratory Ruling on the propriety of both the site location and plan for the 26.5 megawatt generation and a ruling that a more stringent environmental study be by-passed, the EDC noted that the primary use of most of the parcels was for tobacco farming, with chemical fertilizers and chemical pest control sprays having likely been used for decades, and some of the parcels being wooded areas with possible vernal springs and run-offs potentially into the Farmington River. The EDC is very concerned that a full environmental study be done, not to foil the project, but to prevent a late discovery of environmental issues after the solar farm has been constructed and put into operation. The economic impact upon the Town and the private citizens in the areas affected by the said project were such an event happen would be potentially catastrophic, and so the consensus of the EDC was to not oppose the general petition, so long as neighboring property owner's sight-line concerns be adequately addressed, but to oppose the request to declare that a more comprehensive environmental study was not necessary. The EDC wishes that it had more time to digest the information, to have the ability to ask more questions and to come up with a more comprehensive recommendation, but the exigent circumstances of the Petition, the Town's seeking party status and the time allowed for the same does not allow for such. The EDC hopes that the above will be helpful to the Board of Selectmen in their efforts to have the Town's concerns addressed by the Siting Council and Deepwater Wind, LLC.

Sincerely yours,



David M. Moore, Esq.

Acting Chair, Town of Simsbury Economic Development Commission

Cc. Simsbury Economic Development Commissioners