



Farmington River Watershed Association, Inc.

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July 31, 2017

Lisa Heavner, First Selectwoman
Town of Simsbury
933 Hopmeadow St.
Simsbury, CT 06070

Ms. Heavner,

As a follow up to our correspondence in June, I'm providing the following statement from the Farmington River Watershed Association about the proposed Deepwater Wind solar array project in Simsbury.

As an environmental organization dedicated to preserving, protecting, and restoring the Farmington River and its watershed lands, FRWA accepts the predictions of the scientific community that enormous changes in the function of our river system are to be expected in coming decades, due to climate change. We also accept the conclusions of the scientific community that the projected climate change is driven largely by increases in greenhouse gas emissions. We are also aware that the U.S. still produces the largest per capita amount of greenhouse gases. It follows that in general, FRWA strongly supports both energy conservation and a rapid transition to renewable energy sources such as solar power.

At this time, we do not take a position for or against the particular solar array project proposed for Simsbury by Deepwater Wind. Some of the questions it raises are beyond the scope of FRWA's mission. Others that do concern FRWA will need to be examined when more details about the project are available. Most of FRWA's concerns will be what they usually are, for any large construction project: potential short-term and long-term impacts on water quality, water quantity and runoff, and on in-stream and river-corridor habitats and vegetative cover. For example, we would consider:

- Compliance with guidelines for erosion and sediment control during construction.
- The quantity and water quality of stormwater runoff during construction.
- Whether solar panels or any other components of the arrays contribute harmful substances to stormwater runoff over the short or long term.
- Possible impact on the underlying aquifer and nearby surface waters such as small streams.
- How vegetation in and around the array will be managed; including details about the control of invasive vines, shrubs and any other plants that may entail pesticide application
- Extent of lost habitat, and the quality of lost habitat (biodiversity, ecosystem functions).
- Opportunity to test for, and possibly remediate, any contaminated soils before construction.

- Whether similar solar arrays in our region have proven to have low impact on water quality, soils, aquifers, and habitats over a period of several years.

I trust that FRWA and the public in general will have the opportunity to inquire into these issues as the siting process goes forward, and more details of the Deepwater Wind solar project become available.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments, and please let me know if we can be of further help in project review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eileen Fielding". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Eileen Fielding
Executive Director