



**Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council (CEEJAC)
Energy & Technology Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes
Wed, April 2, 2025; 3:00-4:30pm**

Link to Meeting Recording:

https://ctdeep.zoom.us/rec/share/4Qb599Cl8bySSYCC_oS5jp9xcGBioXC77xix4VF0YzAD4J_tfb7sBlaK6l7s3l0.2xb53o3OJA8ix29w

Disclaimer: Please note this is not a word for word translation

1. Welcome from Energy & Technology Subcommittee Chair
2. Introduction of Community Renewable Energy Siting Tool (CREST) - Eric Hammerling, CT DEEP
 - a. Team from CT DEEP and UConn CLEAR as well as over 25 organizations including municipalities and organizations.
 - b. Trying to pursue full decarbonization by 2040 which has meant enacting certain programs like STEPS to implement transparent and efficient siting and permitting process, conservation practices, and developing a tool that leads on these 3 goals.
 - c. STEPS – Sustainable, Transparent and Efficient Practices started back in 2021
 - d. In 2023/2024, PA 24-31 was passed, in section 5 it requires DEEP to develop a map on potential siting of solar projects in the state. This map should be completed by May 2025 for the legislature.
 - i. October 2024 – Kickoff meeting to learn about what data would be helpful to you for decision-making.
 - ii. December 2024 – early version of the GIS-based CREST was developed
 - iii. February 2025 – beta version of the tool was presented for a test drive
 - iv. Now until April 2025 – open to hearing revisions; this is part of the Integrated Resources Plan (IRP)
 - v. May 2025 – launch tool
 - vi. June 18, 2025, 1:00 PM – UConn CLEAR will lead workshops to show how to use CREST to expand public awareness of the tool.
3. Tool Walk Through

- a. Gives people an idea about demographic, ecologic variables across the state
 - b. Tool allows you to select an area on the map where you might want to develop a solar array – then it will tell you what exists within that area that you selected.
 - i. The layers that pop for you does not necessarily mean a negative for the potential impact of the solar development in that area.
 - c. Tool also allows you to add data that does not currently exist
4. Questions
- a. What are the use-cases for this tool? How can leaders use this tool to effect change?
 - i. DEEP: There’s a lot of cross-over with the variables. CREST is looking at solar siting specifically. But the map shows the areas of protected ecological sites that might inform community-based decisions. The “Near Me” tool allows you to see what layers are turned on near you.
 - b. When looking to place solar, the urban areas have been excluded from solar development and thus clean energy? Are there ways to identify parking lots, big box stores that we could put solar?
 - i. DEEP: Impervious Surface Layer could show you areas. One of the collaborators, PACE, did a study in 2005 on impervious surfaces and opportunities for siting rooftop and canopy solar.
 - c. One of the biggest challenges is that we are protecting surface and drinking water supply watersheds, is that here? That’s very critical. Need to think about the public health components of solar. I recommend strongly that Source Water Protection data be added. CLEAR has this GIS layer from DPH. I also recommend showing flood areas. Large scale solar is considered by DEEP as impervious cover and impacts downstream flooding.
 - i. DEEP: a few years ago we had talked about this through STEPS and we took those to heart for groundwater quality for the layers that went into this tool. Surface water quality is for all water not just drinking water quality; need to think about the source water supply.
 - d. I’m curious about the utility data layers and how those collaborations around data sharing (and hopefully maintenance) were/are formed?
 - i. DEEP: We reached out to UI and Eversource to get distributed grid and hosting capacity layers from them. These are available through their platforms as well.
 - e. What types of existing solar data is available on the tool?
 - i. DEEP: Photovoltaic Database (1MW or larger) from USGS; Solar Arrays 2024 data from UConn, US Energy Atlas Solar Resources

1. Solar Arrays data is in the draft data layers list. Do municipalities or the state have data about households with solar?
 2. DEEP: Do not know
- f. How can this tool be socialized? Important to make sure that this tool is socialized, it's not enough to say that you can go to the webpage. Need to make sure that this goes to advocates.
- i. DEEP: Have done some outreach work through existing staff efforts. Will be developing a webpage for the CREST map with resources and information to go along with that.

Resources from Chat:

- [STEPs](#) webpage
- You may [test drive the beta CREST](#) and [take the survey](#) to share your thoughts
 - Comments can be sent to DEEP.STEPS@ct.gov
- June 18, 2025, 1:00 PM Webinar by UConn-CLEAR
- <https://portal.ct.gov/deep/nddb/natural-diversity-data-base-and-environmental-reviews> - Natural Diversity Data Base and Environmental Reviews
- [Solar Canopies 2024 Update_v6](#) – Study from PACE about Solar canopy potential
 - <https://www.pacecleanenergy.org/solarcanopies2024/>