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CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
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RE: STEPs for Solar Development meetings

I appreciate DEEP holding two meetings to discuss the objectives, scope and topics for sessions this fall to hear from the public regarding the future development of solar energy in CT.

A wide range of views were expressed at the meetings. One theme that emerged is the need to better understand facts. Broadly speaking, those in the solar industry expressed frustration that facts about PV technology are not understood. Those skeptical voiced concerns that the impacts of expanded solar on forest and agricultural land are not sufficiently understood.

To make informed decisions about solar power in CT, future listening sessions should help stakeholders understand the benefits/costs of PV technology in greater detail and clarity, including quantitative assessments.

Topics for discussion which would be helpful in this regard include:

- 1) Reviewing of the need for 2,000 -3,500 MW solar. DEEP should explain the reasoning for this target in the 2020 draft IRP. This target needs to be reviewed in light of other clean energy sources that are potentially available. Reducing the need for solar would help reduce conflicts with land preservation.
- 2) Understanding the energy solar can realistically provide. This includes discussing capacity factors, intermittency, and decline in output over time. CT's annual electrical consumption is about 27 TWh and will likely rise. Is the amount of energy that ground-mounted solar can provide worth the costs to the environment and the many benefits it provides (carbon sequestration, clean air and water, habitat, local food and timber production)?
- 3) Review of the area required. 2,000 MW requires approximately 10,000 acres – over half the land area of a town such as Fairfield, Cheshire or Waterford. Will improved technology reduce the area required? How much capacity can be located economically on roof tops and other developed areas to avoid loss of forests and farmland? It needs to be recognized that other types of development consume land.
- 4) How would increased solar affect customer electricity bills? How does support via subsidies, tax credits and SRECs impact the cost of electricity? What is a fair comparison of energy costs with other clean energy sources using total cost over lifetime and considering environmental externalities such as mining needed for raw materials and land use?
- 5) What additional infrastructure, such as transmission lines and storage, will be needed to make solar viable and what are the costs? How will this impact electricity bills?
- 6) How does the approval process work and should it be changed to be more transparent and align with permitting other types of development?

Details such as these need to be explored and understood to be able to decide the extent to which solar is developed and where to build it.

Thank you for considering my views, Fred Behringer