

CONNECTICUT  
Land Conservation Council

Testimony on Senate Bill No. 412  
Committee on Energy and Technology  
Submitted by Amy Blaymore Paterson, Esq., Executive Director  
Connecticut Land Conservation Council  
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Representative Reed, Senator Winfield, Senator Formica, and Members of the Committee on Energy and Technology:

Thank you for this opportunity to present testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) regarding **Proposed Senate Bill No. 412, An Act Restricting the Use of Incentives for the Development of Solar Arrays on Agricultural Land**. CLCC supports this bill in concept.

As the state's umbrella organization for the land conservation community, including its 137+/- land trusts, the Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) advocates for land conservation, stewardship and funding, and works to ensure the long-term strength and viability of the land conservation community in Connecticut.

Last week, the State of Connecticut Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) published a special report "Energy Sprawl in Connecticut" which documents and analyzes the reasons behind the growing trend in siting of utility-scale solar energy facilities on farmland and forest lands. The report describes the impact that such developments have had on these lands, including the fact that "[i]n 2016, the area of farmland and forest selected and/or approved for development of solar facilities nearly equaled the area of such lands preserved by the state in an average year." (CEQ Report page 2). The report goes on to provide recommendations for legislation to address deficiencies in state laws and policies that will incentivize the siting of these facilities on alternative sites.

We respectfully request that the Committee consider CEQ's report and incorporate the recommendations therein as it moves forward in its efforts to address the very important goals of both land conservation and renewable energy production.

As stated by CEQ Chairman Susan Mellow, "We do not see any need for Connecticut's land conservation and renewable energy goals to be in conflict. We envision a future with ample solar energy, farms, and forests." (CEQ News Release dated February 3, 2017)

On behalf of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council, I thank you for this opportunity to provide our comments on this bill. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have and/or provide additional information about the wonderful conservation work undertaken every day by our state's land trust community.