

CONNECTICUT
Land Conservation Council

Comments on House Bill No. 6779
Energy and Technology Committee
Submitted by Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director
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Co-Chairs Needleman and Steinberg, Vice-Chairs Maroney and Sanchez, Ranking Members Fazio and Marra, and members of the Energy and Technology Committee:

The Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) is the state's umbrella organization for the land conservation community, including its ~117 land trusts. CLCC is a 501(c)(3) organization operating statewide. Our mission is to elevate and strengthen land conservation in Connecticut.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments regarding **House Bill No. 6779, An Act Concerning The Siting Of Certain Nonresidential Solar Facilities**, which grants a municipality the authority to restrict the proposed location of nonresidential solar photovoltaic facilities not subject to the jurisdiction of the Connecticut Siting Council.

As Connecticut continues to advance its renewable energy goals, it must balance the expansion of energy infrastructure with the need to protect critical natural resources, including—but not limited to—core forests and prime farmland. The key to Connecticut's success is ensuring that the pursuit of one strategy does not undermine the benefits of another.

Connecticut's forests are a nature-based solution that provides critical benefits, including carbon sequestration and storage, climate resilience, biodiversity protection, flood reduction, and clean water filtration. However, if not sited responsibly, solar infrastructure projects have the potential to fragment forests and degrade soil health, thereby diminishing these ecosystem services.

The siting of renewable energy projects is often a contentious issue in communities across the state. Communities frequently express a preference for locating these projects on previously developed, degraded, or underutilized land before considering forests and farmland. However, many feel that their input on siting decisions is not being heard. Granting municipalities greater control and authority to regulate the placement of certain nonresidential solar developments is a step forward to help address some of these concerns.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.

