

Thank you for allowing time this afternoon for this important discussion. I'd like to give you a few examples of how groSolar has worked with neighbors and municipalities on projects, talk a bit about our process and finally speak briefly to the permitting & Public Service Board process.

I will give three examples of how we as developers of commercial and utility scale projects have worked with neighbors, municipalities, and state agencies prior to and during the CPG process in order to get to a developed project that is well-sited and considers, on balance, the various legitimate interests affected by a proposed project.

The first example is the City Solar project located in Rutland City. The project is located at the City owned property, commonly known as the "Old Poor Farm." The exact location, for those who know Rutland, is directly behind the McDonalds on Route 4 heading towards Killington, essentially across from the high school. groSolar worked with the City of Rutland to secure the site for this project.

The project site is bordered by eleven residences to the west and north.

Early in the development process, among a number of other site investigations, we conducted an aesthetics review of the site and noted that two to three of the aforementioned residences would have the most open view onto the project site. In advance of proceeding with the formal Section 248 permitting process groSolar met with the owners of those residences to explain the project, show renderings of what the project will look like from a broad view, and walk the site to help the homeowners understand what their individual view shed would look like. At that time, we offered that as part of the project, we would commit to taking a look at the view shed from neighbors' homes post construction, and if needed provide for additional visual screening. This could mean extension of back yard fences and/or hedgerows on the adjoining neighbor's properties, or additional screening on the project site itself if what our plan called for was not reasonably sufficient. We went ahead and signed two letter agreements to this

effect with neighbors whose view sheds are most affected by the project. Shortly after sending out the 45-day notice letter, pursuant to the Section 248 filing requirements, groSolar held a public neighborhood meeting to discuss the project and address any questions or concerns. That CPG petition was filed on December 30, 2013. The project was not contested, and a final order approving the project was issued on August 25, 2014.

I use this project as an example not to bring attention to groSolar ~~in~~ ~~that we are responsible developers,~~ but to demonstrate what I believe most of the developers planning commercial projects already do in an effort to work with local communities where projects are being proposed. The other important item to note, as I mention, is that this outreach is in addition to the notice and comment opportunities required during the CPG proceeding. To be clear, the neighborhood meeting and visits that we held were in addition and prior to the PSB public hearing. We do this to avoid surprising an adjoining landowner,

to get a sense of the local sentiment towards the project, and to attempt to collaborate with the neighbors.

The second example I'd like to discuss with you is related to a project site in New Haven. groSolar had identified two sites in New Haven for a 5 MW commercial project. One of the sites identified is located on the westerly side of Route 7. The site is an open field, with slopes to the west and a view of the Adirondacks. A portion of the parcel is zoned commercial and is located next to a small engine equipment dealer. As part of the site due diligence I met with Town of New Haven officials and attended a couple of select board meetings. It became apparent that the Town is very concerned with the proliferation of solar in New Haven generally and more specifically on Route 7 and even more specifically the site we had identified on Route 7. The officials expressed concern that the scenic vistas looking towards the Adirondacks would be affected. After hearing the concerns from the town and feedback from others in the region, groSolar opted not to

proceed with the development of the Route 7 site. Our outreach, which is a necessary step underlying our decisions as developers to invest in a CPG proceeding, was extremely effective.

Finally, I'd like to share a third example, relating to the Cold River Road project in the Town of Rutland. groSolar started looking for sites in the Rutland area in March of 2013. The Cold River site was brought to our attention by a commercial realtor. The Cold River site is located on a parcel that is designated industrial/commercial in the Town Plan Future Land Use map, and was marketed as such by the Rutland Economic Development Authority. Based on these facts, grosolar gained site control via a purchase and sale agreement for the property on April 20th 2013, and proceeded with more thorough site due diligence, in coordination with various state agencies and the local community.

Similar to the process that we employed with the City Solar project, I met with Rutland Town's Administrator in Mid-August of 2013. I shared our preliminary site plan and asked for comments. The only

comment was regarding the sightlines at the intersection of Cold River Road and Stratton Road. The town administrator requested that we pull the array back from the corner of that intersection. Of course, we immediately agreed this was a reasonable request. My colleague and I tried to meet one on one with a few of the neighbors that same day in order to give them a preview of the preliminary plans. My colleague also followed up with a meeting on the site with a group of neighbors in order to describe the project, and explain our willingness to talk about setbacks and visual screening either on our parcel, or again much like the City Solar project, screening on their property from the view shed to the site.

What followed in the Town of Rutland is fairly well documented. The town started the process of developing a solar siting policy. The initial document was hastily developed and was initially conceived to keep the Cold River Project from moving forward as designed. The Town of Rutland has no zoning plan, but the solar siting document was just that

– a zoning plan with egregious setbacks and other rules for solar. This solar siting drafting process went on until it was adopted by the select board in its present form in August of 2014. It was interesting to note early on in the process that much of the input into drafting the solar siting document was by ^{THE} neighbors of the Cold River project. The neighbors were upset with the proposed project and it seemed the town concurred. I remind you, the Cold River project was proposed to be developed on a parcel that is designated industrial/commercial in the Town Plan Future Use Map.

Once we got into the actual CPG proceeding, the opportunity for the town and neighbors, who had intervened was extensive, and the Board's review exhaustive. Our initial filing date with the PSB was December 20th, 2013, we had a public hearing on March 26th, 2014, we had four days of technical hearings from August 20th-22nd and August 27th, the proposal for decision was issued on November 20, 2014, and oral arguments on the proposal for decision were heard on January 7th

2015. In addition we had three site visits, two by the hearing officer and other state agencies, the first on April 18, 2014, the second on August 18th, 2014 and then on January 26th 2015 the full board attended our last public site visit. On March 11, 2015 the final order was issued, the neighbors then filed a motion to reconsider which stayed the final order pending the board's decision on the motion. We feel that 16 months is a long time to permit a commercial solar project, but that timeline speaks to the abundant opportunity which the board affords local interest to be heard, and the amount of consideration and analysis the Board afforded the Town's and Neighbors' arguments.

I tell these stories not only to illustrate how project developers work with neighbors and municipalities now, under the current PSB process, but also to give a preview of what the permitting process would look like if these energy projects were required to go through a local permitting process. Based on our experience with the Cold River project, we had a glimpse of that reality. Solar would be shut-out of the

State by local governments who do not have the statewide perspective in mind. Energy is a statewide shared resource. It's a broader, interconnected grid that we all rely on. Transforming the permitting environment to one which would be defined and developed by over 250 separate entities, or which would even defer to hyper-local interests as paramount, raises many concerns, not the least of which are reliability and foreseeability in the permitting process. Reliability and foreseeability are necessary for developers to make investments in renewable energy infrastructure. The process of permitting state renewable energy projects and more specifically commercial sized solar is thorough and appropriately balances the state energy goals with concerns of neighbors and towns. And, while it is demanding, it does afford the reliability and foreseeability that developers need in order to make calculated investments in this State's renewable energy infrastructure. Thank you.