
OLR Bill Analysis

HB 5608

AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC FACILITIES LOCATED ON PRIME FARMLAND, FARMLAND OF STATE-WIDE IMPORTANCE OR CORE FOREST LANDS.

SUMMARY

This bill prohibits the Connecticut Siting Council from approving a solar photovoltaic facility of at least two-megawatt capacity on prime farmland or core forest without the project applicant providing a bond to cover the facility's decommissioning costs. A decommissioning bond is a way to secure payment for removing an abandoned solar panel system and remediating the land.

By law, "prime farmland" means soils defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as best suited to produce food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. In general, these lands have an adequate and dependable water supply, a favorable temperature and growing season, acceptable acidity or alkalinity, acceptable salt and sodium content, and few or no rocks. "Core forest" is unfragmented forest land that is at least 300 feet from the boundary between forest land and non-forest land, as determined by the energy and environmental protection commissioner (CGS § 16a-3k, citing to 7 C.F.R. § 657.5).

The Connecticut Siting Council is an independent body that regulates the siting of power facilities, transmission lines, and telecommunication facilities. Its decisions must follow guidelines set in law.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

COMMITTEE ACTION

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 32 Nay 0 (03/03/2023)