

Supplemental comment from the Bennington County Regional Commission:

Our original letter to the PUC stated that the BCRC determined “...that this site has access to sufficient solar energy resources and does not contain any known critical environmental, local, or regional constraints that would interfere with development of the site.” Also, that the BCRC “concur (with the Town) with the designation as a preferred site...” That designation also is based on the Regional Plan’s deference to the municipality for such siting decisions. Based on those facts, and the fact that the project is consistent with the Regional Plan’s targets for local and regional renewable energy generation, we are comfortable in saying that the project is consistent with the Regional Plan.

The BCRC is concerned that a finding that the project is not in conformance with the Regional Plan because of impacts on a viewshed would undercut the Plan’s deference to the municipality to make those decisions. The Regional Plan provides clear standards regarding application of environmental and certain historical/cultural constraints to solar facility siting decisions, but sets only broad guidelines for constraints such as aesthetics/viewsheds; it is left to local interests to make determinations on the applicability of those guidelines for specific sites in that municipality.

Jim Sullivan
Executive Director
Bennington county Regional Commission