

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING COMMUNITY AND LANDOWNER RIGHTS AND THE RESPONSIBLE SITING OF COMMERCIAL SOLAR ENERGY FACILITIES

WHEREAS, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §16-50k et seq., the Connecticut Siting Council is granted exclusive jurisdiction over the siting of certain electric generating facilities with a capacity greater than one (1) megawatt, thereby limiting municipal land use authority over such facilities; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §8-2, municipalities are charged with adopting zoning regulations to conserve the value of property, encourage the most appropriate use of land, and protect public health, safety, and welfare; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Ellington supports responsible environmental stewardship and acknowledges the importance of renewable energy as part of Connecticut's long-term energy and climate goals; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Selectmen recognizes that solar energy projects, when appropriately sited and scaled, can contribute to energy diversification and environmental sustainability; and

WHEREAS, commercial solar energy facilities exceeding one (1) megawatt frequently require the clearing or long-term dedication of significant acreage, including agricultural land, forested areas, and open space, which are integral to Ellington's rural character, environmental resources, agricultural heritage, and economic viability; and

WHEREAS, such large-scale facilities may result in long-term and irreversible impacts to land use patterns, wildlife habitat, agricultural-based economy, stormwater management, soil health, and scenic resources; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Selectmen continues to support farmland preservation through a formal Purchase of Development rights (PDR) program established in 2007 by a \$2 million bond authorization, which has enabled the permanent preservation of hundreds of acres of prime agricultural soils, farmland of state importance, and farmland of local importance, in partnership with state and federal farmland preservation agencies.

WHEREAS, the installation and operation of commercial-scale solar facilities can impose additional demands on local infrastructure, including roadways, drainage systems, and emergency response services, without corresponding municipal control or guaranteed mitigation; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Selectmen is concerned that the cumulative impact of multiple large-scale solar installations disproportionately affects rural and agricultural communities such as Ellington; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Selectmen finds that commercial solar facilities exceeding one (1) megawatt often provide limited direct benefit to the host municipality in terms of reduced local energy costs, enhanced grid resiliency, or long-term fiscal benefit relative to the land area consumed; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Ellington will evaluate and, where appropriate, take a position on the siting of commercial solar energy facilities on, or in close proximity to, land identified within Ellington's western farm belt as designated in the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development, and on other lands containing prime agricultural soils or soils classified as farmland of statewide importance, recognizing that disturbance, grading, and compaction of such soils may result in long-term degradation that is not readily or reliably reversible;

WHEREAS, the Town of Ellington recognizes that certain emerging dual-use or agrivoltaic solar technologies may, in limited circumstances, allow for the continued agricultural use of land in conjunction with renewable energy generation; however, such approaches must be demonstrated through credible, site-specific evidence to preserve soil health, agricultural productivity, and long-term farm viability, and shall not be presumed to mitigate impacts to prime agricultural soils or farmland of statewide importance, and

WHEREAS, the Town of Ellington supports renewable energy development strategies that prioritize:

- Rooftop and canopy solar installations;
- Development on brownfields, landfills, and previously disturbed sites;
- Smaller-scale solar projects compatible with local zoning regulations; and
- Energy efficiency, conservation, and demand-reduction measures;


NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Ellington Board of Selectmen will evaluate and, where appropriate, take a position on the siting and installation of additional commercial solar energy facilities exceeding one (1) megawatt within the Town of Ellington where such facilities would result in significant and irreversible impacts to prime agricultural land, valuable environmental resources, rural landscapes, and agricultural opportunities upon which the community of Ellington was founded; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Selectmen respectfully urges the Connecticut General Assembly, the Connecticut Siting Council, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, and relevant state agencies to:

1. Restore and strengthen meaningful municipal input and consent in the siting of large-scale renewable energy facilities;
2. Encourage renewable energy development that is appropriately scaled and equitably distributed across the state; and
3. Protect agricultural land and agricultural economic viability, open space, and established community character while advancing Connecticut's renewable energy goals; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Clerk is directed to transmit a copy of this resolution to Ellington's state legislative delegation, the Office of the Governor, the Connecticut Siting Council, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, and other appropriate state agencies.

Adopted by the Ellington Board of Selectmen this 9th day of March, 2026.



Laurie Burstein
First Selectman