

SOLAR SITING TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS MATRIX

Recommendation Theme	Recommendation	Legislative Change	Rulemaking	Funding implications	SSTF Member
<i>Planning</i>	Expand RPC planning initiative to all regions			X	ML, SS, CR
	Provide tools and technical assistance to towns to undertake deep energy planning in concert with RPCs, so that town plans reasonably accommodate solar and are useful in the siting review process.	X (possibly)	X	X	SS, CR
	Continually develop statewide resources to assist towns and developers in planning for and developing well-sited projects			X	SS
	The State should explore “Fair share” standards by municipality, for all municipalities on a statewide basis to ensure that all municipalities contribute to renewable energy’s impact on the State.	X			AL
	Vermont should consider and discuss what percentage of out-of-state hydro projects we could use to satisfy Vermont’s needs for renewable energy and how that percentage may impact Vermont’s rates and the amount of renewable energy Vermont should generate locally.	X			AL
<i>Incentives</i>	Incentivize projects - through financial or regulatory means - that avoid sensitive environmental, agricultural, and scenic areas and instead utilize rooftops, brownfields, grayfields, and other elements of the built environment.	X (possibly)	X	X (possibly)	ML, SS, AL, AR, CR
	Incentivize projects - through financial or regulatory means - located in target areas identified by towns and regions and/or that engage constructively with host communities (including possibility of co-location of net metering projects in these areas and/or allowing net metering > 500 kW in these areas).	X (possibly)	X	X (possibly)	SS, AR, CR
	Incentivize net metering projects whose benefits go to neighbors.	X			CR
	Align the financial benefit from REC sales to support high-value solar siting objectives, including managing cumulative impacts.	X (possibly)	X (possibly)		SS, AL
	Align incentive structure to encourage building diverse sources of small-scale generation that passes more of the incentives to Vermont ratepayers.	X (possibly)	X (possibly)	X (possibly)	AL
	Ensure that facilities receiving subsidies cannot also require utilities and ratepayers to upgrade public lines serving those facilities (further subsidizing development).	X (possibly)			AL
	Revise notice and response timelines and requirements to facilitate greater engagement by towns and citizens in the project review process	X (possibly)	X		SS
	Develop means to facilitate pre-application mediation between the community and neighbors over solar project siting or design disputes.	X (possibly)	X	X (possibly)	SS

<i>Process, Transparency, and Public Participation</i>	Designate individual at PSB to answer informational questions from the public and applicants.	X (possibly)		X (possibly)	AR
	Speed up process to convert to electronic filing system and ensure all filings and decisions are available in real time.			X (possibly)	AR
	Ensure ability of Agency of Agriculture to participate in 248 process.	X (possibly)	X (possibly)	X (possibly)	CR
	Incorporate simple intervention form for landowners and towns in 248 Guide.		X (possibly)		AR
	PSB should give “substantial deference” to municipal concerns and determinations by holding hearings in any municipality potentially affected by a proposed project.	X			KH
	The PSB should include all local decisions concerning the project within its docket, formulate areas of inquiry based on concerns raised in the local hearing process, and require any decision to address local concerns raised in local determinations and adopted municipal plans.	X			KH
<i>Environment and Aesthetics</i>	Limit smaller-scale (ground-mounted) projects in favor of fewer, larger projects	X			ML
	Expand Quechee Analysis to include neighboring communities and their clearly written community standards	X (possibly)	X		ML
	The PSB should define “average person”, for purposes of applying the Quechee analysis to projects, to mean the same thing that it means in Act 250.	X			KH
	Hold solar to the same aesthetic standards as any other development or land use (neither higher - don't expect it to be invisible - nor lower)	X (possibly)	X		ML, SS
	Require post-construction aesthetics review, with option for towns to assume this authority.	X (possibly)	X (possibly)	X	CR
	Require identification of all equipment and infrastructure on site plans in application, and focus screening efforts on those items		X		ML
	Enable or enhance consideration of cumulative impacts of multiple solar projects in a given town or other defined area in relevant 248 criteria	X (possibly)	X (possibly)		SS, AL
	Municipal Planning Commissions or Selectboards, depending upon the body the community chooses to represent it, should be found to represent the voice of the “average person” in that municipality.	X			AL
	Change the provisions of Act 56 regarding setbacks and screening to provide the municipalities with a greater voice in a manner that is easier to administer.	X			AL
Impacts to functional significance should control the					

	discussion regarding the use of solar on existing farmland that may once have been wetlands and on the use of solar within significant (Class II) wetlands and associated buffer areas.	X (possibly)	X (possibly)		AL
<i>Other</i>	Give 2015 legislative changes time to work (siting, screening, automatic party status) and evaluate their effectiveness.				AR
	The Public Service Department (PSD) and PSB, if not the legislature, should define “community scale” as it is used with reference to energy facilities.	X (possibly)			KH
	Move toward self-generation/net zero in building codes.	X (possibly)			CR
	A municipality should have the right to say at some point that they host a sufficient number of renewable energy projects and more projects would violate their adopted plan or clear community standard.	X			KH