

June 2, 2023

Members of the Cranston Plan Commission:

On behalf of the Natick Community Group who are opposed to the current Natick Solar project appearing in front of you, I write to respond to aspects of Revity's attorney Nick Nybo's recent submission.

While I personally am not bothered by Mr. Nybo's characterization of my presentation at the last meeting, I wish to clarify that the comments presented were, as I clearly stated at the time, *from our community group as a whole* and therefore, his personal attack and dismissal of the those comments is yet another attack on us as a group. And that is actually bothersome-to all of us, and it should be to you as well.

Also, since Mr. Nybo chose to reference my letter (again, one written *on behalf of our group*) to the House Corporations Committee regarding H5540, and to call it 'laughter provoking,' I include it here in its entirety for your review.

Nothing in the referenced letter is any different than anything we, as a group, have said to you, your predecessors, the press, the RI Legislature or indeed to other communities whom we have assisted in their work to protect their cities and towns as we are trying to protect ours.

We look forward to your robust deliberations this coming week,

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Drake".

Drake Patten
Community Representative, Natick Solar

March 29, 2023

House Corporations Committee
Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903
RE: Support H 5540 Relating to Public Utilities and Carriers

Dear Chairman Solomon and Members of the Committee:

I write on behalf of a community group of over 60 Cranston citizens to respectfully urge the House Corporations Committee to adopt H 5540. This bill recognizes the need to reform Rhode Island's renewable energy siting programs to encourage more responsible development.

For the past five years our group and others in Cranston have been battling one of the biggest solar companies and lobbyists, Revity Energy, over a proposed solar installation in our city-one that will destroy a large section of a core, unfragmented forest. The project will involve clearcutting, blasting, stumping and grubbing on sloping ledge that abuts a huge wetland (part of the Meshanticut Watershed that flows to the Pawtuxet). Thanks to a remand from Superior Court, we are still in the fight but an early irresponsible Cranston ordinance literally *drove* projects into our rural and residential areas. Although our group fought successfully to repeal and replace that ordinance, the damage from grandfathered projects has been irreparable. Unfortunately, our local leadership have not consistently protected us and RIDEM claims it does not have adequate tools to do so. For these reasons, the intervention of this bill is truly critical.

Our group believes Rhode Island can and should meet our renewable energy goals but we need our forests *and* responsible renewable energy policy to do so. Like all for-profit endeavors, renewable energy comes in all shapes and sizes: responsible companies already site their projects on disturbed sites because they understand the importance of forests to our overall climate health. Profit-only focused companies choose the cheapest sites and those include our forests and open spaces. Eliminating incentives that have been encouraging the loss of forest and valuable habitat is necessary and long overdue. We also need to consider balancing renewable energies. We must ask, is Rhode Island truly a good solar location, versus a wind location? Based on data from a recent 2020 study, offshore wind will be more cost effective than utility scale solar. We need to pay attention to these data, not just the smooth words of lobbyists.

Similarly, a 2020 study entitled *Solar Siting Opportunities for Rhode Island* showed that as much as 70 percent of Rhode Island's total, current greenhouse gas emissions could be met from solar on disturbed sites. Our group may be willing to pay a surcharge on our electric bills to subsidize renewable energy but we absolutely won't pay for the destruction of the forests and habitats.

We commend the sponsors of this important legislation, Representatives Cotter, Bennet, Cortvriend, Donovan, Kennedy, McGaw, Morales, Place, Speakman and Tanzi and we encourage the Bill's passage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Drake". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Drake Patten, Representative for Natick Ave Community Group
Hurricane Hill Farm, 684 Natick Ave, Cranston RI 02921

Cc: House Speaker Shekarchi,
Representative Barbara Fenton-Fung