

**From:** PAMELA & JOSEPH THEROUX [<mailto:joetheroux426@comcast.net>]

**Sent:** Thursday, May 11, 2017 10:53 PM

**To:** Bachman, Melanie <[Melanie.Bachman@ct.gov](mailto:Melanie.Bachman@ct.gov)>

**Subject:** Fwd: Solar Project concerns

Hello Melanie:

Thank you again for taking the time to talk with me. I know that the Town of Sprague has no jurisdiction over this project but several landowners came to our last regularly scheduled meeting of the Town of Sprague Inland Wetland Commission with their concerns.

In response to our conversation and your request for a summary of my concerns regarding the continuing failures of the E&S measures and discharges from storm water detention/treatment system on the solar project on Potash Hill Road, my concerns are as follows:

1. There have been 3 or 4 significant discharges of storm water transported sediment (which I have directly observed) into adjacent properties, several intermittent watercourses, and recently, 2 farm ponds and the Little River. These discharges have occurred from only 1 to 2 inch storm events. The discharges were only documented on the report for 4/4/17. This same report states that "No significant release of sediment occurred in either location"?? This construction sites E&S /storm water control measures need to be completely tightened up before any further land disturbing activity continues. If there are any further controlled discharges from the site they should only be treated, clean runoff in reasonable quantities that do not cause any erosion.
2. As I am not in the loop, what is the frequency of E&S inspections? Given the history of the site so far I would recommend daily or at least 2-3 X a week.

3. The storm water detention basin closest to Potash Hill Rd. appears to be only approx. 150 feet from the adjacent property. Was it expected that in this short distance that the majority of the storm water discharge would be adequately treated/ infiltrated before reaching the adjacent property in reasonable quantities?
4. It was reported to me that oil sheen was observed by neighbors in storm water discharges and construction equipment was directly observed leaking oil. Allegedly, a tarp was strung beneath the particular piece of equipment to catch the oil and yet it was still being used for grading???
5. Where and how is the construction equipment being re-fueled and maintained? Is storm water transporting fuels and oils?
6. The significant impacts to the wetlands and watercourses functions and values/neighbors properties were apparently not evaluated or documented. This should be done and remediation/mitigation of the wetlands/watercourses/ponds should be mandatory. If these same circumstances/impacts happened on a construction project permitted at the town level, a cease and desist/restore order would have been issued. No construction would be allowed to occur until the remediation was completed. Only the re-construction and fortification of E&S measures and detention basins should be allowed until they are more than adequate.
7. Regarding the above impacts, should the Army Corps of Engineers be involved at this point due to the sedimentation of and corresponding impacts to several watercourses, 2 farm ponds and the Little River?
8. The total acreage of disturbed, non vegetated soil (100+ acres) is obviously too large of an area for the existing E&S measures/storm water detention ponds (as evidenced by the significant discharges). The engineering behind this needs to be re-evaluated by a third party ASAP to determine a sound remedy instead of makeshift site modifications. This project should have been phased.
9. The surrounding neighbors have been repeatedly told that the project has and will not affect the existing/original/historic storm water runoff patterns, and that the original topography/grades were not significantly changed yet many of them have told me that they are seeing significant changes during these recent rain events. If there are no significant changes, why is significant quantities of fill being placed over the ledge behind the detention basin? I did not review the project plans, but I'm sure there are proposed grades shown on the plans showing cuts and fills. The approved plans should be checked with the existing grades to ensure that the original/historic runoff patterns are indeed duplicated.(by a third party if necessary). The site grading should be modified if necessary.

10. The neighbors have also been told that the volume of runoff from the project will be no different as well. They were told that the runoff would infiltrate better than the forested conditions because the topsoil and surfaces would be graded and worked. How can this be the case if the runoff coefficient goes from heavily forested to the post construction conditions of grass and small herbaceous vegetation? There is a significant difference. Especially when you take into consideration that there are significant quantities of ledge on the site, soils with poor infiltration (clay and compact till in B and C horizons), perched water tables, and high water tables, (fall through spring). These conditions are causing these recent 1-2 inch rainfall events to be magnified resulting in the heavy discharges. There will also certainly be frost throughout the entire site (mid to late winter through early spring) due to the lack of tree/organic matter to insulate the ground as well. All of these circumstances will prevent or severely reduce infiltration during the times of the year when the most precipitation occurs. Weren't there test pits or borings done to predict these conditions? This is critical and these conditions should also be considered by the engineers.
11. Timing of this stage of the project is poor. The extensive area and disturbance currently being conducted should occur in the driest months of summer only when the water table is at its lowest point. This would help significantly with the storm water discharge issues.
12. Potash Hill Road and a few private driveways have been undermined/damaged from this last discharge, these damages should be fixed by the contractor to the satisfaction of the Town and or property owners.
13. The original approved clearing limits were completely ignored and the area was clear cut up to the adjacent landowners property lines. Was this also done directly adjacent to the wetlands on the site? What of the promised buffer zones around the wetlands and project, and are the adjacent property owners going to have to live with this intrusion?
14. I am told that the allegedly the approved planting schedule has been deviated from. Apparently cedars are being substituted for other tree species. These will be readily destroyed by the deer browsing after the first heavy winter snow.
15. I would recommend better communication and interaction with the adjacent landowners and neighbors of the project, to learn from their experience, notify them, answer their questions, and dispel their fears, as they will be the people that have to live with this project in their back yards.
16. Please CC me on any further correspondence concerning the project, especially if it concerns inland wetlands and watercourses.

With all this have being said, I think it is the responsibility of the Siting Council and CT. D.E.E.P. to intervene at this point while the construction is just beginning, to prevent further impacts to the surrounding wetlands, watercourses and environment, the adjacent property owners and their properties, and the storm water system of Potash Hill Road.

Please feel free to distribute this e-mail to any and all concerned parties, and if I can be of further assistance, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Joseph R. Theroux

Wetlands Agent, Town of Sprague

Certified Soil Scientist

Certified Forester