

## **Energy and Technology Committee**

**March 7, 2024, Public Hearing**

**Re: HB-5361, An Act Concerning the Siting of Renewable Energy Sources in the State**

Dear Committee members:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding HB-5361, An Act Concerning the Siting of Renewable Energy Sources in the State.

CRCOG generally supports the concepts raised in this bill and the broader objective of limiting any one region in the state from shouldering a disproportionate share of the state's renewable energy generation. The siting of large solar installations, particularly in farmland and open space areas, is often controversial and contrary to the goals set out in local and regional plans of conservation and development. Our municipal officials have found that they need to file as an intervenor to participate in the permitting process in any meaningful way. The intervenor process requires financial resources that many small towns lack.

CRCOG recommends the following improvements to the bill:

- Under subsection 2(k), the bill should more clearly define what the terms “shall consider” will mean with respect to the testimony provided by the local chief elected official. Without additional context, the scope of this requirement is unclear and could prove to be of little value.
- In the underlying statute, CGS §16-50p(a)(3)(B), the Siting Council is required to consider the cumulative impact of a telecommunications tower on a host community. Given the magnitude of the potential impact to the host community, HB 5361 should be amended to require the same cumulative impact consideration for siting grid-scale solar photovoltaic projects. No such requirement currently exists.
- Subsection 2(l) should be amended to close a loop often used by developers to skirt local property tax obligations. Language in 2023's SB 519 would accomplish this goal.

To summarize, CRCOG sees this bill as an excellent starting point to address several of the challenges and inequities encountered by municipalities under the state's current process for siting large solar installations.

I appreciate the Committee's consideration of CRCOG's testimony and can be reached at [mhart@crcog.org](mailto:mhart@crcog.org) with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Matthew W. Hart  
Executive Director

CC: CRCOG Policy Board