

CANDLEWOOD SOLAR – FACT VS. FICTION

Fiction: All the power generated will go to Massachusetts

FACT: Connecticut will receive all electricity generated by Candlewood Solar

34 million kilowatt hours/year of clean, emission-free electricity generated by Candlewood Solar will go directly to the Rocky River Substation in New Milford. The Massachusetts utilities will sell the electrical energy at the substation delivery point and not take the power into Massachusetts. Instead of delivering power to Massachusetts, the utilities will only keep ownership of the Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) associated with solar PV. So, the MA utilities will get “credit” for producing green, renewable energy, but CT will keep the electricity generated by Candlewood Solar.

The electricity generated by Candlewood Solar and sold by the utilities at the Rocky River Substation will be delivered directly to the 345kV high transmission lines that feed power to Fairfield County and other areas of Connecticut – helping to control costs AND reduce the need for fossil-fuel burning plants that contribute to climate change.

Fiction: Solar panels will create glare for pilots using Candlelight Farms Airport

FACT: Solar panels at Candlewood Mtn. have been approved by the Federal Aviation Administration because they will not cause glare to air planes

Ameresco, the owner of the Candlewood Solar project, submitted a glare study, using the ForgeSolar analysis software, to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The FAA independently analyzed the glare study analysis and collected comments from interested parties. The FAA result? There is no glare hazard to pilots.

Ameresco has built solar arrays at airports and military bases, including Boston’s Logan International Airport, Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, and Hill Air Force Base. The arrays have satisfactorily operated without glare concerns or incidents.

Fiction: Candlewood Solar should pay three times the amount of taxes that were agreed to

FACT: The Town of New Milford will receive almost 700% more tax revenue from Candlewood Solar than it would receive under current and forecasted taxes

Candlewood Solar will pay the Town \$2.75 million in property taxes over the 20-year life of the project, in increasing amounts each year.

If the 163-acre property were to remain in its current state, over the same 20-year period, the Town would collect less than \$400,000, and, for just the 80 acres that Ameresco will be using for the solar array, the town would collect less than \$200,000 over the same 20-year period.

The \$2.75 million tax payment will be significant additional revenue for the town, with no impacts or costs to town schools, road maintenance, or the town's fire or police services. It is pure revenue with no additional costs to New Milford.

Fiction: There's no agreement to hire locally for construction

FACT: Over 100 construction jobs are needed to build Candlewood Solar, and local workers will be hired by Ameresco's sub-contractors

As part of its tax agreement with the Town of New Milford, Ameresco agreed to give preference to local contractors, subcontractors, and workers to install, construct and maintain the facility.

Ameresco also agreed to give the Town a written report prior to construction on the percentage of work for local sub-contractors and workers. The report will be updated when the project is fully operational to show the actual usage of local subcontractors and workers

Fiction: There's no decommissioning plan for 20 years from now when the solar array reaches the end of its life. Remember Century Brass?

FACT: In 20 years, the owners of Candlewood Solar will remove the solar array and all associated equipment as required under its Tax Agreement with the Town. A modern-day solar array cannot be compared to an abandoned manufacturing plant built in the 1950s

Ameresco's Tax Agreement with the Town of New Milford requires Ameresco to submit a decommissioning plan for the complete removal of the solar PV system, with such removal occurring within 180 days following the end of solar PV operations. In addition, the Tax Agreement requires Ameresco to post a surety performance bond, naming the Town as an obligee, to cover the cost of decommissioning.

To be clear, Ameresco will pay the costs of decommissioning and removal –New Milford's taxpayers will pay nothing.

It is unfair to compare Candlewood Solar to the old, Century Brass manufacturing plant. The Century Brass site is A DEEP listed “hazardous waste” site due to long term, unregulated environmental contamination arising in the brass manufacturing process. Candlewood Solar will not be generating hazardous wastes.

Fiction: There is no Development and Management Plan ensuring the protection of the vernal pools, wildlife and core forest growth on Candlewood Mountain.

FACT: The Development and Management (D&M) Plan is under review by the Connecticut Siting Council and the Town of New Milford and its consultant. Ameresco will be requesting the opportunity to review the D&M plan and the storm water plan with representatives of the Town of New Milford in the very near future. Additionally, the D&M Plan was provided to the Towns of Brookfield and New Fairfield as well as all parties and intervenors on the Connecticut Siting Council service list. The D&M Plan must be approved by the Connecticut Siting Council prior to the commencement of facility construction.

Ameresco is following all Connecticut Siting Council and Department of Energy and Environmental Protection requirements including the submission of the D&M plan and the Storm Water Plan.

It should be noted that the subject property is not zoned for open space protection nor for the protection of forests and wildlife. Instead, after extensive public hearings, it was zoned for the largest housing development project in New Milford’s history. The zoning allows for high density residential development as an active adult housing complex with commercial uses. If such project was to come to fruition, it would require more demands on town services such as police and fire protection, increased electricity and other utility demands, increased stormwater runoff, and would more significantly change the natural habitat and the view of Candlewood Mountain.

Instead of a housing complex, Candlewood Solar will preserve 100 acres of forestland; will conserve a substantial tree line around the solar array so that it will be almost completely hidden from view from Candlewood Lake or any other location around the mountain; it will not increase stormwater runoff or generate any form of pollution; it will not impact town resources or roads; and, most importantly, it will generate 34 million kilowatt hours of clean, emission-free energy each year.