



Connecticut Fund  
for the Environment

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## **Bloomfield, Canton, Woodbridge call for Shared Solar**

*Growing list of communities asks state leaders to institute full-scale shared solar program to expand clean energy access*

NEW HAVEN, CONN. – Three Connecticut communities have joined a statewide movement demanding shared solar access. Bloomfield, Canton, and Woodbridge recently passed resolutions calling on state leaders to institute measures that would make clean energy more available and affordable—especially to apartment dwellers and renters—by allowing electric ratepayers to purchase shares of solar arrays located nearby.

“Shared solar not only promotes equal access to clean energy, but also adds high-wage jobs, provides electric bill savings, generates state revenue, and reduces the burning of fossil fuels,” said **Claire Coleman, climate and energy attorney at Connecticut Fund for the Environment**. “Many other states already benefit from statewide shared solar programs, including our neighbors in Massachusetts and New York. Here at Connecticut Fund for the Environment, we’re thrilled that Woodbridge, Canton, and Bloomfield joined in the call for a cleaner energy future and helped garner support for the establishment of a statewide shared solar in Connecticut. The modest program approved by the legislature this spring is an important step forward for Connecticut, but will need to be expanded quickly to meet the demand that’s out there and bring cost savings and healthier air to all Connecticut families.”

**Woodbridge’s** Board of Selectmen passed its resolution, which also supported allowing towns to utilize virtual net metering, on April 11, 2018 following a presentation by the Chair of the town’s Ad Hoc Sustainability Committee, Jon Gorham, and CFE’s Claire Coleman. First Selectman Beth Heller spoke in favor of the resolution, highlighting its consistency with the town’s historic support for renewable energy growth. The Board voted to approve it 5 to 1.

In **Canton**, a spirited debate led to another 5 to 1 vote from that town’s Board of Selectmen on May 9. Given the very recent passage of Senate Bill 9, which includes a small, statewide shared solar program, the selects had questions for CFE solar organizer David Desiderato regarding the need for a full-scale program. Desiderato pointed out that less than 3 percent of Canton’s housing units currently have rooftop solar, and that the rate of installation has slowed; shared solar could dramatically increase clean energy access for town residents.

After Marianne “Charlie” Horn of **Bloomfield’s** Conservation, Energy, and Environment Committee saw a shared solar presentation by Desiderato, she brought a model resolution to the committee. The committee, with the support of chair Marie MacDonald and member Valerie Rossetti, approved the measure and sent it on to the Town Council, which approved the resolution on May 14. That same evening, clean energy company CTEC—one of three

companies in Connecticut's limited Shared Clean Energy Pilot program—reported that its local project is fully subscribed and the Council gave its final approval.

Solar power is clean, renewable, stable, and is fast becoming cheaper than coal and gas. By mid-2017, about 23,000 Connecticut residents had put solar panels on their roofs. But four out of five Connecticut residents can't benefit because their roofs are too shady or face the wrong direction, because they rent or live in multi-family buildings. And many families simply can't afford the upfront costs of installation. Shared solar is the solution. It allows any electricity customer to contract for a portion of solar power produced by a larger solar array, with the benefits automatically credited to their bill and without having to install solar panels at their home.

In Connecticut, utility companies had repeatedly blocked shared solar legislation beyond the small pilot program that was authorized in 2015. This legislative session, CFE and a diverse coalition of shared solar supporters gained traction by passing a bill through committee with overwhelming bipartisan support. The original bill would have allowed 300 megawatts of shared solar—the same size authorized for residential rooftop solar. A more modest, statewide program that focusses on providing shared solar access to low-income families and small businesses was included in a separate comprehensive energy bill, SB 9, that passed both chambers and which the Governor signed into law on May 24, 2018. Clean energy and environmental advocates and municipal leaders are pleased that Connecticut has moved beyond the pilot to expand shared solar access, and will continue to push to grow this program in future years.

The latest resolutions from Woodbridge, Canton, and Bloomfield join previous calls for shared solar from Hartford and New Haven.

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*For local spokespeople in each community, please contact Laura McMillan.*

*Canton resolution on pp93-94 of Board*

*packet:* [http://www.townofcantonct.org/filestorage/6662/7004/7012/34441/05.09.18\\_BOS\\_Packet.pdf](http://www.townofcantonct.org/filestorage/6662/7004/7012/34441/05.09.18_BOS_Packet.pdf)

*Minutes of the Canton*

*meeting:* [http://www.townofcantonct.org/filestorage/6662/7004/7016/34449/05.09.2018\\_BOS\\_Draft\\_Meeting\\_Minutes.pdf](http://www.townofcantonct.org/filestorage/6662/7004/7016/34449/05.09.2018_BOS_Draft_Meeting_Minutes.pdf)

*Minutes of the Woodbridge*

*Meeting:* <https://www.woodbridgect.org/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Minutes/04112018-1204>

*The Woodbridge and Bloomfield resolutions are similar, but not yet online.*