
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5457

AN ACT CONCERNING FIRES AND EXPLOSIONS THAT OCCUR AT SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC FACILITIES.

SUMMARY

By law, fire chiefs or local fire marshals must report fires, explosions, and other fire emergencies to the State Fire Marshal. This bill requires local fire marshals to also give the Connecticut Siting Council this incident report for any fire or explosion at a solar photovoltaic (PV) electric generating facility under the council's jurisdiction (see BACKGROUND). By law, these reports must include (1) facts about the incident's cause, origin, and nature; (2) the estimated value and ownership of the property damaged or destroyed; and (3) any other information the State Fire Marshal requests.

The bill also sets conditions under which the Siting Council must open an amendment proceeding to require these facility owners to adopt a fire mitigation plan and may require other similar facilities to do the same.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

FIRE MITIGATION PLANS FOR SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC ELECTRIC GENERATING FACILITIES

Under the bill, within 30 days after receiving a fire or explosion incident report, the Siting Council, together with the fire marshal that delivered the report, must determine whether any solar PV facility equipment was a contributing factor to the fire or explosion. If so, the council must open an amendment proceeding to amend the certificate issued to the facility's owner to require the owner to adopt a solar PV facility fire mitigation plan. The plan must at least include an explicit description of the best management practices the owner will use, informed by the latest science when the plan is made, to avoid,

minimize, and mitigate fire or explosion risks at the facility.

Within 180 days after the end of an amendment proceeding in which a fire mitigation plan was adopted, the Siting Council must determine if there are any other Connecticut facilities similarly situated to the facility subject to the amendment. If so, it may initiate an amendment proceeding to require the facility's owner to adopt the same fire mitigation plan.

BACKGROUND

Electric Generating Facilities Under Siting Council Jurisdiction

The Siting Council has jurisdiction over siting most electric generation and storage facilities, but its jurisdiction does not extend to emergency generators or generation facilities that are:

1. owned and operated by a private power producer (certain non-utility generators);
2. a qualifying small power production facility or a qualifying cogeneration facility under the federal Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act (a facility that uses renewable energy or simultaneously produces electricity and useful heat) or a facility the council determines to be primarily for a producer's own use; or
3. a renewable energy facility with a generating capacity of 1 megawatt (MW) or less or a cogeneration facility with a capacity of 25 MW or less (CGS § 16-50i(a)(3)).

Related Bill

sHB 5472, favorably reported by the Energy and Technology Committee, (1) requires covered electric generating or storage facilities to report certain major and minor incidents to the Siting Council and designate an emergency contact person and (2) allows the Siting Council, in approving these facilities, to require applicants to provide emergency services training for their proposed facilities to local firefighters or other local emergency services personnel.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 23 Nay 6 (03/17/2026)