

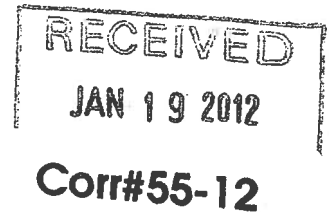
ADDENDUM to Committee Agenda – January 23rd, 2012 @ 1:30PM

PLANNING

- 55-12 Correspondence from Harry Nixon regarding the proposed solar facility at 725 Cragg Road in the Township of Scugog expressing concerns for the placement of such a facility on prime, food producing farmland.

Committee Recommendation:

THAT Correspondence Number 55-12 be Received and Referred to the Director of Community Services.



January 15, 2012

Hon. Larry Corrigan
Councillor, Ward 1
181 Perry St.
Box 780
Port Perry, Ontario
L9L 1A7

Dear Mr. Corrigan,

This letter is in regard to the planned solar facility at **725 Cragg Road, Scugog Township (also known as Epsom Solar Farm)**. Solray Energy Corporation has obtained a contract for the sale of electricity with the Ontario Power Authority through the Feed-in-Tariff (FIT) program.

First, I would like to make it clear that I have no issue with solar power or any renewable energy source. What I am seriously concerned about is the placement of such a facility on prime, food producing farmland. The land is comprised primarily of CLI (Canada Land Inventory) Class 1 soils and with a small percentage being Class 3 soils, with surrounding land being Class 1. The placement of the proposed facility is on the class 1 portion of the land. The Ontario Power Authority has restrictions for placing large scale solar projects on Class 1 agricultural land:

The Minister of Energy and Infrastructure directed the Ontario Power Authority not to enter into contracts for ground-mounted solar PV projects greater than 100 kilowatts (kW) whose facilities are located on:

- **Lands comprised of CLI Class 1, 2 or 3 soils, unless the Class 3 land is designated as "Class 3 available"**

(<http://fit.powerauthority.on.ca/agricultural-land-restrictions-solar-pv>).

At a presentation by Solray, they admitted that their "**loophole**" to put this facility on prime farmland was due to the classification given to the farmland in the zoning bylaw in the Township of Scugog, where the land is classified as RU- rural. In this township there is no separate classification for agricultural land. This property had been a functioning, food producing farm for several generations, and has been operating as such through 2011.

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The Township of Scugog – Community Planning Department issued a report on December 12, 2011 stating that: *“It has been suggested that these and other applications are being pursued because, technically, the lands are not zoned agricultural. While this is the case, the “rural” zone is intended to implement the Agricultural and Greenlands System designation of the Township Official Plan. This type of zoning nomenclature is common throughout Ontario and is certainly not unique to Scugog.*

Fundamentally, rural lands in CLI classes 1, 2 and 3, all of which have a high capability for agriculture, should not be taken out of production for other uses such as large scale solar installations. This concept is supported by the policies of the Township’s new Official Plan, which are intended to ... ‘protect land suitable for agricultural production from fragmentation, development and land uses unrelated to agriculture’.

Whether or not lands have an agricultural zoning on them should not be material consideration in the approval process... ”

As we continue to lose our farmland in Ontario, it seems unscrupulous that our government would allow for such loopholes to exist. Why are these facilities not being placed on poorer classifications of land?

Only .5% of all Canada’s land is considered class 1 farmland (according to Canada Land Inventory), and more than half of this land is found in Ontario. Class 1 means that it has no significant limitations for farming and has highest productivity for a variety of crops.

Ontario farm and processing sector generates over \$30 billion in sales, and employs 700,000 people. (<http://www.ontariofarmlandtrust.ca/issues-and-programs/saving-farmland>)

Ontario has lost at least 600,000 acres of farmland between 1996 through 2006. This includes 18% of Ontario’s Class 1 farmland. **600,000 acre loss equates to a net loss of 0.5 M people that could be fed (assuming 1.2 acres/person).**

In closing, I feel that, regardless of zoning, **prime farmland with Class designation 1, 2 or 3, should not be used for solar or wind power development, not only in our community, but in any rural/agricultural community.** I look forward to receiving a response from you. Your prompt attention to this matter is imperative.

Sincerely,

Harry Nixon

HARRY NIXON

[REDACTED]