



CREST

THE COMMUNITY RENEWABLE ENERGY SITING TOOL

NOVEMBER 15, 2025, CACIWC WORKSHOP

WITH STUART DELAND AND ERIC HAMMERLING

CREST ORIGINATORS



CT DEEP STEPS Team

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VISION FOR CREST AND SITING RENEWABLE ENERGY



Further Connecticut's clean energy goals – full decarbonization by 2040.



Enable a more transparent and efficient renewable energy siting and permitting process (Goal 14 of 20BY26).



Conserve Connecticut's environmental resources equitably in all communities.



Provide a tool with publicly available data that leads to the 3 goals above.

25+ “CREST COLLABORATIVE” ADVISING ORGANIZATIONS

<u>Electric Utilities</u>	Avangrid/United Illuminating	Eversource	<u>Equity and Environmental Justice Stakeholders</u>	Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council (CEEJAC)	<u>Farmland, Open Space, Wildlife, and Renewable Energy Conservation NGOs</u>	Acadia Center
Audubon CT	Connecticut Energy Network	Connecticut Farm Bureau	Connecticut Farmland Trust	Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC)	Connecticut RC&D	CT Roundtable on Climate & Jobs
PACE	Sierra Club, CT Chapter	Sustainable CT	The Nature Conservancy, CT Chapter	Working Lands Alliance	<u>Municipal/Regional Representatives</u>	CT Conference of Municipalities (CCM)
Council of Small Towns (COST)	9 Councils of Government (COGs)	<u>Solar Energy Developers/Legal Advisors</u>	Pullman & Comley, LLC	Verogy	VHB	<u>State Agencies (other)</u>
	DOAG	CEQ	DECD	OPM	PURA	

HOW WE GOT HERE, PART I

2023/2024

DEEP and UConn CLEAR collaborate on early vision for CREST Collaborative and develop list of individuals and orgs to participate.

May 2024

CGA passes **P.A. 24-31** requiring DEEP to develop map to inform “potential siting of solar projects in the state.”

October 2024

CREST Collaborative Kickoff Meeting to introduce siting tool.

December 2024

DEEP STEPS/UConn team share early version of GIS-based CREST. CREST Collaborative members share ideas for additional GIS data sets and tool functionality.

HOW WE GOT HERE, PART II

February 2025

Beta CREST presented and test drive available for CREST Collaborative members and legislators.

March 2025

Changes to *Beta CREST* presented with goal of making any last revisions of this version by April/May 2025. Shared survey results and feedback received to date.

May 2025

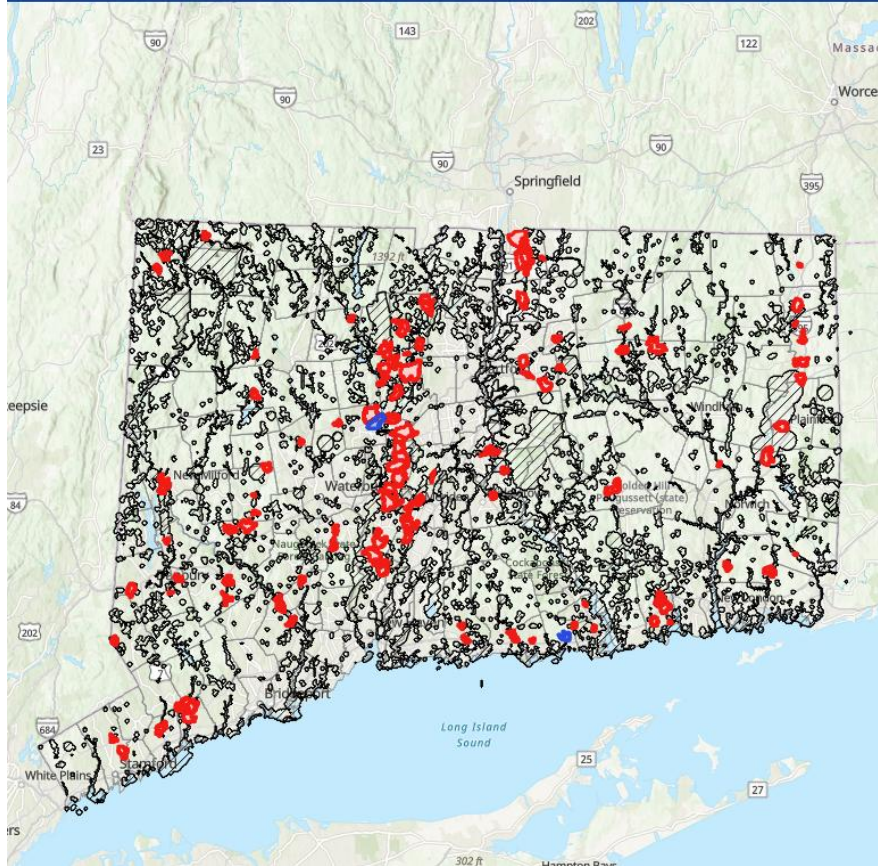
CREST launched 5/14/25 pursuant to P.A. 24-31. Will continue to receive public input through Integrated Resources Plan (IRP) process and DEEP advisory groups like CEEJAC.

Today

First CREST Workshop with UConn-CLEAR on 6/18. Continuing outreach to expand public awareness and use of the tool. Webinars like today.

CREST SUPPORTS TRANSPARENCY, PREDICTABILITY, AND EQUITY

Tool (CREST)



- **Open-access data** - Gives towns, residents, developers, and regulators the same visual information.
- **Predictable siting decisions** - Helps speed up projects by steering them towards suitable / least conflict locations.
- **Easy to use** – You don't have to be an expert in Geographic Information Systems or map-making.
- **Free to all** - All you need is access to the internet.
- **Useful** – Can be used for ANY spatial research.

CREST BENEFITS THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS

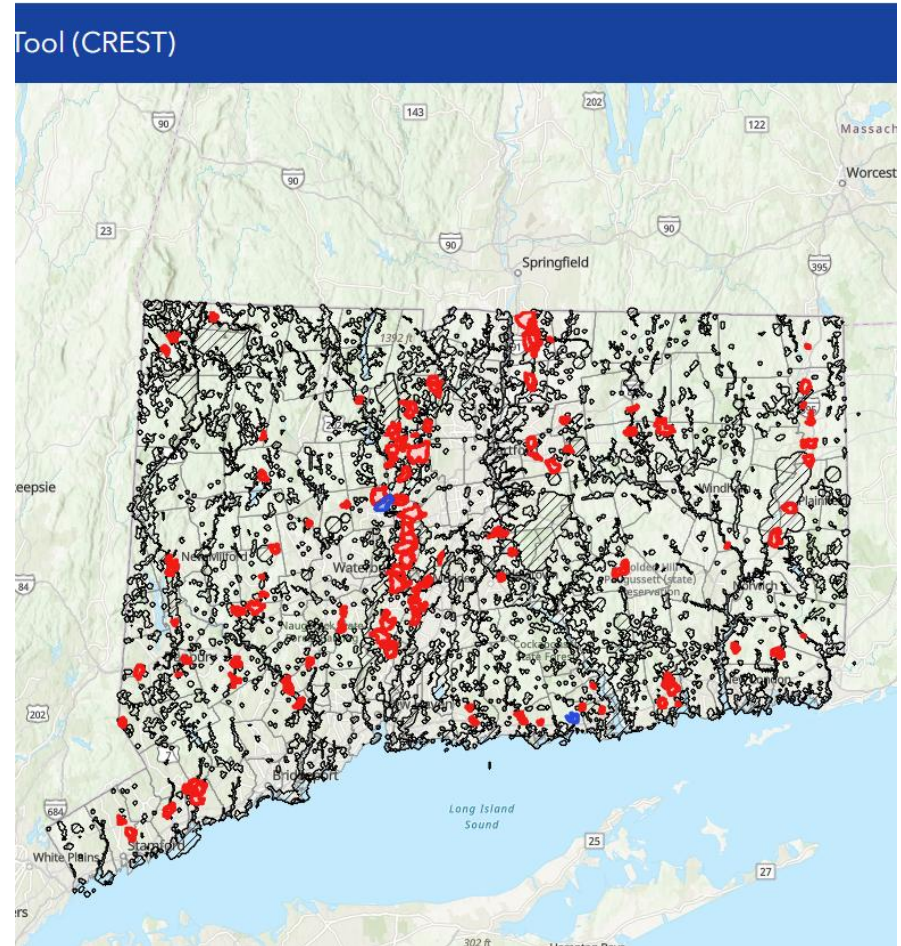
Health - Clean energy reduces pollution, improves air quality and public health.

Affordability and Speed - Better siting tools lower long-term cost of renewables by reducing permitting delays and disputes.

Prosperity - CREST supports investment in renewables, local jobs, and grid resilience.

Quality of Life - Informed siting decisions protect forests, farmland, water resources, and the character of communities in balance with a greater supply of renewable energy.

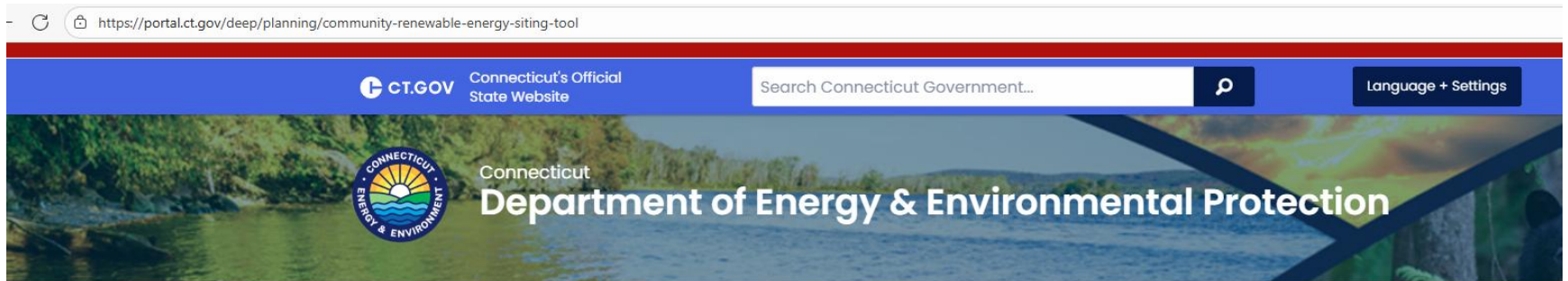
All in One Place - CREST brings 35 individual map layers together so that you can explore how information is spatially interrelated.



HOW MIGHT CREST BE A USEFUL TOOL FOR INLAND WETLAND & CONSERVATION COMMISSIONERS?

- Review natural resource and other data before and/or after field visits
- Spur questions that you may wish to ask applicants
- Get ideas on ways to avoid and/or mitigate environmental impacts
- Understand how a property may be connected to surrounding properties
- See how natural/geographic/other resources on a site may interrelate
- View a local data set as a layer with CREST resources as the background

FINDING CREST ON DEEP'S WEBSITE




[CT.gov Home](#) / [Department of Energy & Environmental Protection](#) / [Community Renewable Energy Siting Tool \(CREST\)](#)

- How Do I... >
- About Us >
- Energy >
- Environmental Quality >
- Natural Resources >
- Outdoor Recreation >
- Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) >


Search Department of Energy & Environmental Protection

by Keyword

Community Renewable Energy Siting Tool (CREST)

Public Act 24-31  required DEEP to put information regarding the potential siting of solar projects in the state overlaid onto existing grid interconnection maps maintained by the electric distribution companies as part of the [Integrated Resources Plan](#).

CREST Collaborative

DEEP designed CREST in partnership with the University of Connecticut's Center for Land Use Education and Research ([UConn CLEAR](#)) and the CREST Collaborative, an advisory group convened in October 2024 to guide the development, testing, and distribution of CREST ([What is CREST factsheet](#) ). The CREST Collaborative is comprised of representatives from over 20 organizations, spanning municipalities and regional councils of government; community-based organizations advocating for farmland, open space, wildlife, and renewable energy outcomes; electric utilities; solar developers; and other partners.

CREST Map Viewer

CREST is intended as a planning tool for informational purposes only and is not intended to be used or interpreted to be an agency determination on solar suitability.

CREST Map Viewer



<https://portal.ct.gov/deep/planning/community-renewable-energy-siting-tool>

NEXT STEPS FOR CREST

- CREST is part of the Integrated Resources Plan (IRP) for Connecticut that DEEP is leading. The purpose of the IRP is to identify strategies to affordably and reliably meet our state's growing electricity needs.
- DEEP will continue to offer webinars on how to use CREST.
 - **Scheduled Webinars/Demonstration Sessions**
 - ~~UConn CLEAR – June 18~~
 - ~~CT Chapter American Planning Association – September 10~~
 - ~~Connecticut Sun Day at CCSU – September 21~~
 - ~~DEEP Lunch and Learn – September 30 (internal)~~
 - ~~ECOS / NASEO Workshop for New England, NY, & NJ State Enviro and Energy Staff – October 9 (internal)~~
 - ~~Council Of Small Towns Webinar – November 13~~
 - CACIWC Annual Conference – November 15
 - CLCC Land Conservation Conference – March 2026
- DEEP's STEPS team will continue working on guidance associated with siting of solar on certain types of lands (e.g., brownfields or previously developed properties).
- Data layers available in CREST will be maintained/updated/refined regularly through time to ensure the application remains useful.
- Feedback on CREST is always welcome via DEEP.STEPS@ct.gov

IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER ABOUT CREST

**CREST combines natural resource, utility, and other information for free public use. It is a planning tool developed for informational purposes only and is not intended to be used or interpreted as an agency determination or regulatory decision related to solar suitability.