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TESTIMONY FOR ENERGY SITING HEARINGS

HOLYOKE HERITAGE STATE PARK – MAY 5, 2025

Dr. Christopher Queen



My name is Chris Queen. I am a member of the citizen's group, No Assault & Batteries in Wendell, Massachusetts. We are grateful for the opportunity to testify at these hearings.

Our group was founded in 2023 to oppose the construction of a 110 Megawatt Lithium-Ion Battery Energy Storage System on forested land in our town. We believe that forests, farmlands, wetlands, and wildlife corridors should not be sacrificed for industrial development. We also believe that the Commonwealth's clean energy targets can be met by utilizing land that has already been developed. In a vote of 100 to 1, our town passed a bylaw protecting the natural environment from industrial development. But the state Attorney General has shot down our bylaw on technical grounds, Wendell is appealing. Meanwhile, the company threatening our forests has withdrawn its proposal.

Everyone knows about the explosion of the world's largest battery storage facility at Moss Landing, California on January 16. That fire burned for five days, leaving a toxic plume and ash that reached agricultural and wetlands in a five-county area.

Last week, the city of Westfield, Mass. announced that a Texas company had withdrawn its lithium-ion battery storage proposal following public outcry over threats of fire near neighborhoods and pollution of the aquifer that supplies the city with drinking water.

No Assault and Batteries has submitted *50 Siting Suitability Standards for Clean Energy Installations* and also prepared a detailed response to *DOER's Straw Proposal for Site Suitability* to be submitted next week.

Our positions on siting suitability and local control of environmental protection may

be summed up in five basic principles:

1. The Commonwealth must prohibit disruption of forests, wetlands, farmlands, wildlife habitat, and flood plains by energy infrastructure projects.
2. Solar facilities must be sited on previously developed lands: rooftops, parking lots, landfills, and brown fields — as close as possible to high energy use areas.
3. Cities and towns must be allowed to protect the health and safety of citizens and ecosystems through local zoning and general bylaws.
4. Battery energy storage systems must be attached to and serve only renewable energy systems to qualify for Chapter 40 A, section 3 protection – and be constructed away from sensitive natural and working lands.
5. Energy efficiency and conservation must be prioritized with incentives to enable clean energy products and projects that protect ecosystems.

Thank you for your attention to these public concerns.