



May 15, 2025

As a follow up to my comments at the May 5th public hearing, I offer the following. While I appreciate the thinking and effort that has gone into this process thus far, I remain concerned that finding ways to use *less* electricity has not been sufficiently explored. I have spent nearly 48 years working in various ways to protect the Commonwealth's natural resources by serving in local government and on local, regional, and state committees and nonprofit boards with similar environmentally oriented goals. I have observed that the constant ***balancing of interests between development and the environment have resulted in fewer and/or degraded natural resources to "balance" the next time.***

Now the long predicted Climate Crisis has arrived and as Al Gore put it, Earth is in the Balance! We are balancing interests again—but to what end? I see the situation as akin to a major war effort. Everyone should be tightening their belts.

My questions are as follows and I hope to hear answers in the next round of comments:

- How can we conserve what we have and use less rather than constantly create demand for more?
- Who is really making the demand for more energy and why? Profiteering happens, right?
- Is the “needed energy” desirable for the long term health of the planet and all living things?
- How can we mandate more efficient energy use from whatever sources?
- Has any comprehensive effort been made to engage the public in using less electricity?
- What real effort has been made to incentivize protecting the values forests provide?

"Clean energy" is manufactured from not-so-clean sources and methods. When production is motivated by profit rather than public health, safety, and welfare, the results will be disastrous.

It seems that some state agency and administration goals are in various degrees of conflict with each other. An agency trying to protect forests, farms, and habitat feels pressured to put solar in places that scientific reports say will damage forests and farms and undermine carbon sequestration. Another agency seeks increases in revenue which taxing some industries might help, but consumers balk at paying more and towns are vilified as NIMBYs because some they recognize that some industries don't benefit but will in fact harm their communities and their natural resources. ***How is environmental justice served if rural towns are required to pollute themselves?***

Massachusetts is a thumbprint on the planet, but we can lead the way to getting our values and priorities straight and be leaders in this effort to save the planet without succumbing to the notion that solar will save us. Public engagement and local knowledge are key to solar siting because among other things, we in WMass are not just isolated communities—we are a region affected by state and local decisions. With the federal government in a mess, we must focus on surviving in a world that is worth living in.

Massachusetts is too small to ignore potential effects on water supply and pretty much everything else by awarding siting authority to the state without ample and sufficient local input. Whenever there is a conflict between local knowledge and corporate or agency plans, locals should have clear roles and financial help in making decisions—with an emphasis on why the project can't be located elsewhere.

Don't forget: Western Mass woods and soils protect Eastern Mass drinking water and farms. It costs more to clean up and mitigate later than it does to get it done right in the first place. It really shouldn't be all about the money this time—too much is out of balance and more is at stake.

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