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To: [SitingBoard Filing \(DPU\)](#)
Subject: As a Stakeholder....
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Dear Siting Board,

I am a resident of Shutesbury, MA where a large industrial solar developer is attempting to join with the largest landowner in Massachusetts to clearcut more than 650 acres of old contiguous forest to accommodate six industrial solar powerplants (five in Shutesbury and one just over the line in Amherst). In Shutesbury our forest has already had forest clearcut for one industrial solar power plant so the proposed development would give our small, vulnerable town six in total.

Old forests urgently need to be protected, not massively cleared. Forests help ward off and promote resilience in the face of climate change and should not be cleared for industrial solar and battery storage facilities. In Shutesbury, most of the sites are on a steep mountain (1280 feet going down to 450 feet in 3 miles of all dirt roads) that is in the Amherst, MA drinking water watershed. This clearcutting means we face risks of erosion of our roads, flooding, increase pollution as water fails to be purified by the forest on its way down, and decrease recharge of our wells. Our entire town depends on wells for our water. This contiguous forest is also designated as core habitat in which the state has deemed it inadvisable to log or build industrial solar. see [Mass Biomaps](#). The solar powerplants would fracture this forest, which will be devastating for the remaining wildlife and flora that depend on old contiguous forests such as ours.

Such clearcutting is also destroying our planet's only technology that removes carbon from the atmosphere. [The state has shown](#) that there is plenty of already disturbed land on which to build enough solar to meet our state's goals. The only reason our town has so many proposed sites is because it would be more profitable for the developer and landowner. If their concern was at all related to climate change, they would build on already disturbed land. In other words, our town is being "green-washed," exploited by the industry for profit in the name of green energy.

All this is to say that there must be a way for regulators to hear and take into account the particular landscapes and communities in which industrial solar is proposed. They must involve the people who live here, know the land, the watersheds, and wildlife in their consideration of permitting and siting. Regulators do not live here and are not direct stakeholders. We do and are. They need us so they can protect the state with their regulations.

We have so much to lose if our voices are steamrolled. Erasing the voices of the local communities is undemocratic and dangerous for our planet.

Thank you for reading this,

Sharon Weizenbaum

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