

From: [Stacey McCullough](#)
To: [SitingBoard Filing \(DPU\)](#)
Subject: Stakeholder comments
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Dear Energy Facilities Siting Board Members:

I'm very concerned with how profit motives have driven solar installations onto sensitive sites. I'm in strong support of the rapid expansion of solar energy, which I believe is necessary for our ambitious and appropriate climate goals. Thankfully, the MA DOER's Technical Capacity of Solar and Mass Audubon's and Harvard Forest's Growing Solar each independently reach the same, mutually corroborating conclusion. That is, we have the land we need for this solar capacity in MA, without continuing on our current, destructive path of misaligned profit incentives that promote the destruction of biodiverse, sensitive lands. I would like to see your standards direct such projects away from such lands to the highest degree possible. Forests should not be clear-cut, watersheds should not be sacrificed, and habitats should not be destroyed, even for something as critical as solar.

I'm additionally concerned with the over-centralization of regulating these projects. People in the most impacted towns need to be able to reasonably regulate proposed solar projects, in more than just an advisory capacity. There is a division between communities where most energy is consumed and communities like my own, where most ecologically precious forests are. Many of us have chosen to live here because of how we feel about the natural environment. To us it's obvious that forests are inextricably tied to our health, safety, and welfare. It's not fair to strip legislative authority from those of us who feel the same way, and so choose to live among forests, and hand it to those who don't, and let them decide what constitutes our health, safety, and welfare for us. I agree that we shouldn't be able to ban or unreasonably regulate solar -- solar is too important for that. But, for example, it's entirely reasonable for us to require siting it in the most appropriate local areas.

Finally I'll mention a siting idea that I've asked the DOER and my senator about. Namely, siting solar in electric companies' cleared rights-of-way. We see proposal after proposal from the likes of Eversource and National Grid to clear-cut miles and miles of woods within their rights-of-way to broaden their corridors. I'd like to see a policy requiring or incentivizing the installation of solar panels in tandem with these kinds of proposals. My understanding is that that's prevented now because utilities in Massachusetts can't own solar systems. I figured that was probably for good reason, but I didn't know why, so I looked and found legislation that appears as though it was probably meant to protect municipalities from the negative effects of profiteering solar development projects. If so, it seems to me to be backfiring, as municipalities are subjected to even more harmful solar projects on forestland instead of on these already-cleared rights-of-way. So as part of your siting standards, I'd like you to consider re-directing siting accordingly.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Stacey McCullough