From: Mary Lou Ferro
To: SMART, DOER (ENE)
Subject: Solar Invasion - Save Our Forests!
Date: Friday, September 27, 2019 9:41:29 AM

To All Concerned;
It is very concerning about the way that industrial solar development is incentivized and encouraged in our state. I live in a small rural community and solar companies have been aggressively seeking land purchases in our town, with plans to remove forested areas and undeveloped open space in order to construct multi-acre solar arrays. They have already decimated Native American Burial Places against MGL-on Pratt Corner Road!
I strongly feel that this is a deeply inappropriate use of the natural resources of our forests and open space areas. I believe there is a desperate need for these areas to be maintained, not destroyed, for the resources they provide for residents, wildlife, and the region.
It does not make sense to decimate one resource in order to attempt to conserve another.
Because solar companies say that it is more expensive to build on existing buildings or developed properties, I urge state officials to utilize any funding that we are providing to solar development to help offset these differences.
You must responsibly provide incentives to companies that are placing solar where it belongs, on existing buildings, brownfields, landfills, parking lots, and already-developed properties.
I am thoroughly against any financial incentives being given to companies that plan to remove forested areas or to utilize undeveloped or agricultural land for solar panels in any way.
It would be extremely short sighted to destroy these resources, which will become more and more critical with climate changes. Forest is desperately needed for clean air, clean water, carbon sequestration, and habitat for already-stressed wildlife.
Open space is already needed and will be more critically needed for growing healthy food, animal pastures and residential housing opportunities.
Local communities such as ours have also felt pressure from solar corporations to agree to their proposals, because corporations are making a habit of bringing lawsuits against municipalities who deny solar, when they are simply attempting to protect open space, forest and the rural characters of their town.
This is appalling and deeply disturbing and needs to stop.
I urge state officials to provide assistance to municipalities in order to help them be able to stand firm in their important and difficult job of protecting land and townships from this destruction and pressure.
Rural communities do not have the infrastructure necessary to support such large-scale construction: employees are not available to oversee the incredible amount of construction specs, fire departments are not prepared for the safety issues, and roads are not prepared for the heavy industrial construction traffic, just to name a few issues.
I urge state officials to help our municipalities to protect natural resources by, at the very least, only providing incentives for companies to place solar arrays where they are appropriate, useful and truly environmental.
Please help change the tide of this pressure that is very concerning to the future of our rural towns and the vital-to-all forests and farms of our beautiful
state.
Thank you.
Sincerely,

~Mary Lou Conca
105 Wendell Road
Shutesbury, MA 01072
mlferro2@hotmail.com

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