

**From:** [Mary Thomas](#)  
**To:** [SMART, DOER \(ENE\)](#)  
**Subject:** 400 MW Review Public Comments  
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To the DOER:

As a member of the Wendell Conservation Commission, I have experienced first-hand the attacks on small town's forests in Western Mass by industrial-solar developers. One developer sued our small-town-volunteer government for trying to control how their plan would affect our community. Another developer's legal team has just implied that it will do the same.

The Conservation Commission's only tool for protecting our town's sylvan character is to enforce the Wetlands Protection Act and the local Wetlands Bylaw, neither of which has any jurisdiction over forests that aren't in or closely bordering wetlands.

I've recently learned that volunteer governments in many other small towns in Massachusetts are experiencing the same treatment, mostly by large, out-of-state solar developers.

Intact forests are far more than scenic. They are the lungs of the planet wildlife habitat and migration corridors, and -- as huge carbon-storing "machines" -- forests are our most potent weapon in battling the climate crisis. They must be protected by the SMART regulations to the fullest extent possible.

Thank you for your consideration.  
Mary Thomas  
Wendell, MA

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43% of threatened and endangered species in the US are wetland dependent