

September 23, 2019

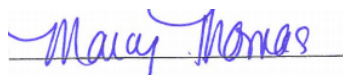
To Whom It May Concern:

While I am in full agreement that Massachusetts must address alternative ways to mitigate climate change, I beg you to reconsider one aspect of the program that is shortsighted and to be blunt, not-so-smart. By encouraging the removal of forestland for large-scale solar arrays, you will be eliminating what is a most elegant and effective way to sequester carbon. The IPCC report “includes a section for carbon dioxide removal in order to reduce the polluting gasses that are *already* in the atmosphere, in which “reforestation and ecosystem restoration,” along with similar nature-based activities, are named as the only methods that are well understood to be effective” **If we stop short of cutting down the trees, there will be no need to reforest.** In places where they removed trees, they have learned from their mistake and are implementing ambitious and immediate tree planting projects. Multiple important studies point to the protection of complex forests as the single-most important way to sequester carbon and it seems that re-planting a single species without its natural forest community, is not as effective. DOER, IPCC, and all the important players understand this. So why then, is Massachusetts encouraging the *removal* of forests?

Please consider that what is at stake here goes beyond counting photons and generating electricity. Over 20 years the benefit from this fixed incentive program will diminish as the technology ages; however, the damage done by removing forests will increase, especially on steep poorly drained soils. The damage to forests will exacerbate other considerable impacts of climate change like flash flooding, increased erosion, increased groundwater contamination, temperature changes of both air and surrounding surface water. Ecosystem services provided by the forests cannot be reproduced!

Please protect the forests and continue the good work you are doing by developing solar facilities on previously compromised sites like rooftops, and paved surfaces.

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