

Barnicle, Abby (ENE)

From: Comerford, Joanne (SEN) <jo.comerford@masenate.gov>
Sent: Friday, October 30, 2020 8:24 AM
To: DOER SMART (ENE)
Subject: SMART ASTGU Guideline Comments

Dear Colleagues at the Department of Energy Resources,

Thank you for your work in this time of climate crisis. Given my rural, western Massachusetts, heavily forested and farmed district, I join you in wanting to use solar and land to fight climate change in the most effective way possible.

During the past legislative session, I have taken a deep dive into solar, land, forest, farm policy, and the way these various policies intersect to impact the constituents, municipalities, and land values in my district. With this in mind I want to provide the following comment regarding dual use solar on prime farmland, unique farmland and additional land of statewide importance:

On behalf of my constituents, I believe we must slow it down.

The land conservation community has serious concerns about what this current proposal will mean in terms of losing farmland or other prime open space to development. I join the Land Conservation Coalition in believing that the effectiveness of dual-use solar on agricultural land has yet to be proven (though I believe we must continue to advance its development), and that the SMART agricultural adder should be removed entirely.

We should do far more to incentivize solar development, but incentives should focus on promoting solar on the built environment, as opposed solar on prime farmland.

Development pressures pose an existential threat to our farms and forests as tracked by Mass Audubon's Losing Ground report, and our solar incentive program must not add to that pressure- I oppose any SMART agricultural adder for now.

If solar is to be sited on farmland, it should be sited on the farmland least suitable for farming, not on prime farmland, unique farmland and additional land of statewide importance.

Thank you for your work and for your consideration of these comments.

JO COMERFORD

State Senator

Hampshire, Franklin, Worcester district