

November 6th, 2019

Commissioner Judith Judson
Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources
100 Cambridge Street
Suite 1020
Boston, MA 02114

Re: Comments on the Proposed Agricultural Solar Generation Tariff Unit Guideline Changes

Dear Commissioner Judson,

CVE North America, Inc. is an independent power producer with six projects totaling over 30 MW enrolled in the SMART program. We thank the DOER for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Agricultural Solar Generation Tariff Unit Guideline changes. We acknowledge that dual use projects that allow both solar energy generation and agricultural production are beneficial to continue developing clean energy in the state while preserving farmland. This mechanism is important to provide farmers with economic opportunities to preserve and keep farming their land. Such programs have implications beyond the solar industry and have the potential to present an ambitious example for the rest of the Northeast. We understand that guidelines should exist to help solar developers and farmers to design efficient and financially viable agricultural and solar systems.

However, we believe that the current guidelines are already too restrictive to encourage dual use projects and do not reflect the variety of different system designs that could meet the intentions of the ASGTU regulations. As a concrete example, CVE North America had the opportunity to work with a cranberry farmer who was considering putting his land out of the farming operation earlier this year. Our team considered the possibility to develop a dual use project on that land in order to maintain the cranberry operation and capture the ASGTU adder. However, the restrictions imposed by the DOER guidelines (shade requirement, limited size of installation, height of panels) and the cost of building an elevated canopy did not allow the dual use system to be financially viable. The dual use solution was therefore abandoned for this project. Given this experience and after reviewing the proposed Agricultural Solar Generation Tariff Unit Guideline Changes, here are the comments and recommendations submitted by CVE North America:

- The DOER should not add additional restrictions to the guidelines until the first projects are in operation.

So far there has not been a single dual use project in operation meeting the ASGTU guidelines and only very few in development. The DOER needs to wait until the first projects are in operation following the original guidelines in order to collect data regarding the requirements of such projects, their cost and their impact on agricultural yields. Those data should be made public to help solar developers and farmers design agricultural solar systems that allow both solar generation and agricultural and preservation

- An Agricultural Solar Working Group should be created to collect and share data about dual use projects in development and in operation

This working group would gather regulators, agricultural and solar professionals to find feasible and financially viable ways to develop dual use projects in the state. It is crucial to gather available information from the various stakeholders involved in dual use projects in order to have an informed vision of the requirements necessary to develop solar on farmland. Doing so will also give the opportunity to see the different type of designs that could meet the intentions of the ASGTU.

- The current guidelines' restrictions should be amended as follows:
 - The system size restriction of 2MW AC should be removed as it diminishes the economic feasibility of project.
 - The maximum sunlight reduction requirement should be replaced by the compatible sunlight needs rule. Instead of having to respect a maximum shading rule, developers should be able to only provide documentation showing that the design sunlight amount and sunlight reduction is compatible with the proposed agricultural crops over the project lifetime.

We thank you for your consideration and stay at your disposal for any questions regarding those comments.

Kind regards,

CVE North America, Inc