To Whom It May Concern:

I am a resident of Chesterfield, Massachusetts and I am writing to express concern over the State Energy Office draft model bylaw regarding the siting of solar arrays. Let me be clear, I am completely in favor of a speedy transition to green energy (solar, wind, geothermal) away from fossil fuels. However, there are additional issues to be considered and I urge the Energy Office to create a long-range plan that balances the need for renewable energy with the protection of our natural and historical resources in Massachusetts.

For example, I am concerned that contractors will favor the siting of solar arrays on open or forested land as an easy and less expensive option. There are acres of existing, developed land (parking lots, large buildings, etc.) that would be ideal for solar, closer to power infrastructure, and could, in the case of parking lots, provide shade for vehicles. I fear that, in the haste to provide electricity for industry, such as AI, we will irrevocably damage open and forested land.

Finally, it is important to give local communities a voice in these decisions, as it is our community that would be impacted. We would welcome solar installations, along with those in urban areas, but they must be sited in a manner consistent with our environment and along with, not instead of, use of existing siting possibilities.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Justin P. West

Professor emeritus of Media

Chesterfield, Massachusetts