



Floating Solar Photovoltaic Projects Frequently Asked Questions – FAQs: Drinking Water Program

MassDEP's Bureau of Water Resources has compiled this Questions & Answers document to assist our regulated community with questions about proposing floating solar arrays on water bodies in Massachusetts.

1. What is the status of floating solar arrays on public drinking water reservoirs in Massachusetts?

- MassDEP's Drinking Water Program oversees all waters used by public water suppliers (PWS) as sources of water supply.
- MassDEP's Drinking Water Program generally considers any physical substance or matter in water a prohibited contaminant unless it has been approved.
- Floating solar arrays are inconsistent with the primary purpose and requirements of PWS which is to provide the public with water that is safe and fit.
- MassDEP's Drinking Water Program is not aware of any floating solar arrays that have been permitted in the United States on drinking water supplies that are surface waters.

2. Is there any instance where floating solar might be considered on drinking water reservoirs?

- MassDEP's Drinking Water Program seeks to avoid siting floating solar arrays on active and inactive public drinking water reservoirs. If all other permits/approvals are obtained, installations may be possible on *emergency* reservoirs only with appropriate monitoring. MassDEP determines the status of public water supply sources.

3. What approvals may be required for Floating Solar Arrays under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act and/or Massachusetts Drinking Water regulations, 310 CMR 22.00?

- There are at least three approvals by MassDEP's Drinking Water Program that may be required:
 - New product reviews under 310 CMR 22.04(8) for equipment that will come in contact with drinking water are subject to close scrutiny.

To complete an application under MassDEP's *New Product or Technology Review Policy*, the project proponent will submit the results of testing by a nationally recognized independent testing organization documenting the product is suitable for use on surface waters used as for drinking water purposes.

Note: Even if installation of the equipment is approved by MassDEP, the installation of such equipment on a surface water supply source could adversely impact public water suppliers' ability to maintain their filtration waivers or disinfection log credits.
 - 310 CMR 22.04(4) – Construction or substantial modification of a public water system
 - 310 CMR 22.24 – Change in use of water supply lands



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Note: Proposed floating solar arrays may be subject to additional state and local reviews and requirements.

Where may I obtain more information on this topic from the Drinking Water Program?

Contact program.director-dwp@mass.gov (subject heading: floating solar).