

Meno, Stephen (ENE)

From: DOER.Siting.Permitting@mass.gov (ENE)
Sent: Friday, October 17, 2025 5:17 PM
To: Meno, Stephen (ENE); Gage, Allison (ENE); Castillo, Marcela (ENE); Rockett, Connor (ENE); Bickford, Bailey (ENE); Droogan, Hailey (ENE)
Subject: FW: Comments on Siting regs from City of Northampton

Rick Collins (he/him)

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Creating a clean, affordable, resilient, and equitable
energy future for all in the Commonwealth.

From: Carolyn Misch <cmisch@northamptonma.gov>
Sent: Friday, October 17, 2025 2:56 PM
To: DOER.Siting.Permitting@mass.gov (ENE) <DOER.Siting.Permitting@mass.gov>
Subject: Comments on Siting regs from City of Northampton

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To Whom it may concern, please see our comments/ concerns about Solar Siting regs:

Northampton has a long standing requirement for applicants of all projects that result in tree removal of a certain size DBH to replace those trees or make a payment in lieu of replacement in accordance with a formula in our ordinance. It would appear that mitigation would be usurped by this ESB review if there is a determination by the state that this is not relevant.

Compensatory Environmental Mitigation. Mitigation measures which are funded by but not performed by the Applicant and are consistent with the restoration, establishment, enhancement, or preservation of environmental resources comparable to those negatively impacted by the siting of a Small Clean Energy Infrastructure Facility

All materials necessary for site plan review, if required by the Local Government, including, but not limited to,..... SHOULD INCLUDE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT CONTROL PLAN, TREE INVENTORY AND REMOVAL PLAN FOR ALL TREES OVER 10" DBH

All requests for relief from applicable zoning or land use regulations, bylaws, and ordinances as well as any materials needed to support the requests including, but not limited to, zoning maps and use tables, and any other materials required under the Local

Government's bylaws or ordinances and all other information required by the Department in its Guideline on the Consolidated Local Permit Application; WHO GETS TO DECIDE ON THE REQUEST FOR WAIVER? THERE ARE SOME WAIVERS THAT WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED: IE TREE INVENTORY, STORMWATER MANGEMENTAT THIS LIST SHOULD BE PARED SO APPLICANTS ARE NOT GRANTED CARTE BLANCHE THE ABILITY TO ASK FOR WAIVERS FROM ALL.

29.07 - Exemptions. Facilities located above existing, permitted parking lots could be included as an exemption to create an incentive for greyfield development

29.13 M. This section should be clear that a community whose ordinances or bylaws meet or exceed the requirements of the model bylaw need not adopt a new set

29.02, definitions, abutter: require notification to abutters within 300 feet, not just those directly adjoining

Prefiling 29.08(f) Pre-filing meeting. Clarify applicant, not municipality responsibility

Unclear how this will interact with communities' existing zoning overlay districts, such as ridgeline protection, floodplain, scenic road, etc.

Communities with existing or proposed zoning districts specifically ridgeline protection bylaws and overlay zones

RE: [siting guidelines](#) This is not strong enough on limitations or prohibitions on tree clearing. Strong score implications need to be provided to any projects that propose significant tree clearing, and proh. Requiring mitigation planting for trees removed is critical for incidental tree removal, but clearing of significant forests should not be permitted.

Page 10: "*Large and Small Clean Energy Transmission and Distribution Infrastructure Facilities crossing through Protected Open Space may apply for a waiver if they can demonstrate no other suitable route or location exists.*" How does this comply with PLPA??? We would **STRONGLY OPPOSE** any thought of a project proposed in protected open space, unless the applicant can demonstrate a preexisting reserved right for this activity within a deed or restriction.

Definition of open space should also include land currently enrolled in Chapter 61 programs

Section v - agricultural resources. Farmland of Local Importance should be added as a soils class with high point value.

Thank you,

Carolyn Misch, AICP
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