

Comments to SMART Emergency Regulations

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Dear Commissioner Woodcock:

I am a landowner in Wilbraham, MA and am writing to raise strenuous objection to the Land Use & Siting Criteria in your Emergency Regulations. Specifically Section 7. C., Ineligible Land Use. I own a parcel of land that I have under agreement with a solar developer which is now ineligible because they fall under the BioMap 2 Priority Habitat/Core Habitat designation as mapped by the State. In my opinion, this type of regulation which negatively impacts thousands of private landowners across MA needs to be eliminated from the final regulations. There are already protections in place within the existing framework of environmental permitting through Mass Wildlife's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP). Based on my understanding of this provision, it will kill the project on my land as well as hundred's of other projects across the State. The solar developer with whom I have an agreement has told me that when siting solar projects, they look for robust electrical infrastructure which does not require substantial upgrades which are expensive and cause significant delays. The project on my parcel falls into that category. By DOER including this provision within their emergency regulations, they have in effect eliminated a lot of good properties near robust electrical infrastructure. This is short sighted and will neither achieve the State's ambitious renewable energy goals or achieve any additional environmental benefits as the existing process through NHESP ensures those protections. I urge you to remove this provision from the final regulations.

Respectfully,

Dr. Robert L. Matthews

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