

SMART Public Comment: Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART)

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To: SMART, DOER (ENE) <doer.smart@mass.gov>

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Hello,

I am writing to comment on the Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART). Thank you for having the regulations prohibit solar energy development where at least 50 percent of the parcel's land area is designated as Priority Habitat, Core Habitat, or Critical Natural Landscape as defined by BioMap2. These critical resources support not only the wildlife habitat of species under pressure from development and climate change effects, but also provide key ecological services that all our towns and communities depend upon. At this time of many crises of the environment and now public health, as a licensed forester in the state and as a member of the conservation community I urge your program to safeguard the forests and farms of our state by expanding these protections to include prime forest and farm soils found, as well as providing incentives for solar panels to be placed on previously developed areas such as rooftops, parking canopies, median strips and highway cloverleaves. In addition, I hope you will consider additional strategies for avoiding impact to forests and farms in our region.

Aiming the program to create the least disturbance of intact forests and natural landscapes is an urgent complement to the reduction in carbon consumption that the use of these renewable resources will make possible. Solar as a source of income needs to be a vibrant component of our economy. However, the guidelines of your program will steer their placement which has the potential to undermine the point of their adoption. Please work to make this program align with other state climate and conservation programs and goals and avoid solar being a driver in large scale development of natural land.

Best regards,
Emily

Emily Boss

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