

SMART Public Comment - I support solar siting that works for both people and nature

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

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Department of Energy Resources

I am glad to see proposed updates to the Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART) Program will increase statewide solar capacity and improve access for low-income projects. Responding as a global community to the threat of climate change means increasing and improving access to renewable energy sources.

Thank you for steering new projects away from irreplaceable natural lands by ending eligibility for new, large-scale, private solar projects in the most ecologically sensitive areas, like habitat for state-listed rare species, and Critical Natural Landscapes.

However, I urge you to go further by:

- * Increasing funding for projects within existing developed lands, like rooftop arrays and parking lot canopies, which have far fewer development impacts than arrays on open land.
- * Performing an analysis of "preferred lands" that can help Massachusetts meet solar goals while limiting new development
- * Providing more planning assistance to small communities to help direct projects to the right locations.

It's important to make sure expanded solar access doesn't come at the expense of our forests and other natural resources.

I oppose changes in the SMART guidelines that push large scale solar

farms into the small towns in the western part of the state.

Thank you for considering these comments, and for improving the solar landscape in Massachusetts in a way that benefits consumers, the climate, and conservation.

Sincerely,

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