

SMART Guideline Comments

JASON HICKEY <jhickey228@comcast.net>

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

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DOER/To Whom it May Concern:

My primary concern about solar development in our state is that a commercial/industrial scale solar array has no place in a rural residential neighborhood. I am also concerned that multiple arrays placed close together (even with space to separate) would essentially be one large array, and could negatively impact a residential neighborhood. Unfortunately, under the current SMART guidelines, such ground-mounted solar installations are not only possible, but encouraged. I have solar panels on my house, and support solar installations where appropriate. I believe that the SMART program should incentivize solar development on commercial/industrial/residential rooftops, parking lot canopies, brownfields etc. Greenfields development should be minimized to protect our forests.

As you may be aware, four towns in my area were destroyed to create the Quabbin Reservoir for Boston's water supply. As I listen to those favoring unrestricted solar as a solution to climate change, I can't help but think of this historical context. While I share the view that climate change is an urgent matter that requires immediate action, I do not believe that it is our town's responsibility to shoulder a disproportionate burden. Yes, we must do our part, but we also have the right to maintain our quality of life. For me and many others, this includes protecting the woodlands that provide wildlife habitat and are essential to our town's rural character.

If solar companies (and the individual property owners that stand to profit as well) are allowed to destroy our forests for commercial solar arrays because at present that is their most profitable option, we will have lost a huge part of what makes Massachusetts a beautiful place to call home. Adding insult to injury, the potential solar proposal in my neighborhood is from an out of state company (California). I urge the DOER to consider the rights of all property owners whose homes and neighborhoods are being affected by large ground-mounted solar installations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Laurie Hickey, 228 Secret Lake Road, Athol, MA 01331