

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

July 25, 2025

Commissioner Elizabeth Mahony
Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources
100 Cambridge Street, 9th Floor, Boston, MA 02114

Subject: SMART 3.0 Emergency Regulations – Laketricity Comments

Dear Commissioner Mahony:

Laketricity appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments to the Department of Energy Resources (“Department”) in response to the June 20, 2025, SMART 3.0 Emergency Regulations filing.

We commend the Department for its commitment to advancing solar energy deployment in response to New England’s growing generation challenges. The SMART 3.0 Emergency Regulations represent an important step toward accelerating near-term solar development, and we strongly encourage continued swift implementation of the program.

As a company specializing in floating solar, dual-use solutions that preserve both land and water resources, we are eager to actively participate in this effort. We believe that promoting best practices in sustainable, non-conflicting solar siting will be essential to the long-term success of the energy transition in the region.

Laketricity submit the following comments and appreciate DOER’s consideration of our recommendations.

Floating STGU Adder Parity with Other Dual-Use Generation Types

Floating STGUs represent a clear dual-use solar deployment pathway: enabling renewable energy generation on existing, underutilized water surfaces with **no displacement of land-based uses**. Similar to Agricultural STGUs and Canopy STGUs, Floating STGUs require:

- Site-specific technical design and engineering,
- Additional environmental reviews,
- Higher capital costs, and
- Siting restrictions limited to already impacted areas.

Despite these shared characteristics, the **Floating Solar Adder remains lower** than the adder levels available for Agricultural and Canopy STGUs under the SMART program.

We would recommend that DOER review the Floating Solar Adder and consider aligning it with the incentive levels offered to other dual-use project types such as Agricultural and Canopy STGUs. Given the permitting complexity, installation costs, and limited site eligibility, we believe Floating STGUs merit adder parity within the SMART incentive structure.

Floating STGU Capacity Cap of 10 MW per Program Year

225 CMR 28.07(5)(b)4(c) currently limits the total statewide capacity of Floating STGUs to 10 MW per Program Year. While we appreciate the Department's efforts to manage market growth responsibly, the 10 MW cap does not reflect the increasing demand for low-impact solar deployment, nor the potential of floating solar to contribute to Massachusetts' decarbonization goals with minimal land-use tradeoffs.

As Floating STGUs are limited to pre-impacted waterbodies and are subject to strict environmental criteria, this low cap may artificially constrain responsible project development.

We recommend that the Department reconsider the 10 MW annual cap for Floating STGUs and either increase it or clarify the criteria and process by which the cap may be adjusted in future years based on program uptake.

If the cap is maintained, we request clarification on how project queueing and waitlists will function when the cap is reached.

Water Quality Impact Requirements for Floating STGUs

225 CMR 28.07(5)(b)4.a.ii requires Floating STGUs to use racking systems "tested for water quality impact" and "shown to have no or minimal impact." While we support environmental safeguards, the regulation does not provide clarity on what types of testing are accepted, what entities may conduct such tests, or what thresholds constitute "minimal" impact.

We recommend that DOER provide clearer guidance on the documentation required to satisfy the water quality testing criteria for Floating STGUs, in order to minimize uncertainty and ensure consistent interpretation across projects.

Energy Storage Requirements for Floating STGUs

One of the main benefits of Floating STGUs is their ability to generate clean energy with minimal land impact by utilizing existing water surfaces. Requiring or encouraging the co-location of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) undermines this key advantage, as storage systems require substantial land area for siting, access, and compliance with fire and safety codes.

Floating solar installations have previously been granted waivers for the energy storage requirement, and we hope that such flexibility will continue, as certain projects are not well suited for co-location.

We recommend that DOER explicitly provide flexibility for Floating STGUs with respect to the energy storage co-location requirement outlined in **225 CMR 28.07(4)(e)**.

Clarification on Wetland Resource areas

We recommend that DOER provide additional clarification on the definition of "wetland resource areas" as it applies to Floating STGUs, to ensure consistent understanding and application across jurisdictions.

To further support project developers and permitting authorities, we suggest that DOER include or reference an official **ArcGIS layer** that maps these wetland resource areas. Providing this geospatial data would reduce ambiguity, help avoid misinterpretation, and streamline the site screening and permitting process.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments. Laketricity looks forward to continuing our engagement in this process. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

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