

Jeff Weston
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July 24 2025

Dear Members of the Department of Energy Resources:

My name is Jeff Weston. I am an elected member of the Shutesbury Planning Board. I am part of the regulatory body charged with reviewing development projects. I am responsible for protecting the public health, safety and welfare of our town. I am here to express my strong support of the new SMART regulations. However, these new SMART regulations should protect not only the Core Habitats but also the Critical Natural Landscape areas identified in BioMap 3. They should also not allow forests to be clear-cut for solar projects.

At the present time our town is being sued by Cowls, the largest private landowner in Massachusetts and PureSky, an international energy company. Puresky has submitted solar siting plans that would affect approximately 360 acres of our forested land. The new SMART regulations should not give large financial incentives for solar projects on forested land. We have a court date of November 4, 2025.

One of the Key Findings of a report the Massachusetts Audubon and The Thompson Lab at Harvard Forest is that clear cutting forests is actually counterproductive to our goal of reducing the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

We are one of the 8 towns that borders the Quabbin Reservoir, one of the largest unfiltered water supplies in the United States. Shutesbury also contains the Atkins Reservoir, which is a major water supply for Amherst and the University of Massachusetts. Our forests protect, filter and clean these very valuable waters.

An extensive study published by the American Chemical Society shows that extinguishing water from lithium-ion batteries (included in solar sitings) produces

significant concentrations of nickel, cobalt, lithium, manganese and fluoride which show a high toxicity. It is horrifying to contemplate the ecological and financial disaster if tens of thousands of gallons of toxic water from a Lithium-ion fire were allowed to flow from our forested town into the Quabbin or Atkins Reservoirs or the aquifers which supply all of the drinking water of our town. Our town which is 90% forested presently protects these critical water supplies.

By passing the new SMART regulations with added protection for Critical Natural Landscapes and by eliminating the clear cutting of forests, you will allow the members of our Planning Board to continue to protect our forests. We need your help so we can continue to be the stewards of the Atkins Reservoir, our town aquifer, and the Quabbin Reservoir, which is absolutely essential for 3 million people in and around Boston.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Weston". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeff Weston