



MASSACHUSETTS
**DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY RESOURCES**

225 CMR 29.00

**Clean Energy Siting and
Permitting Draft Guidelines**

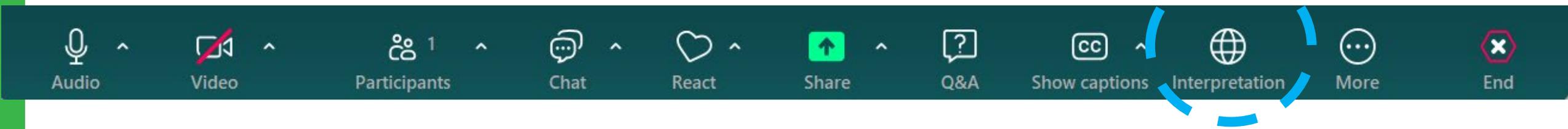
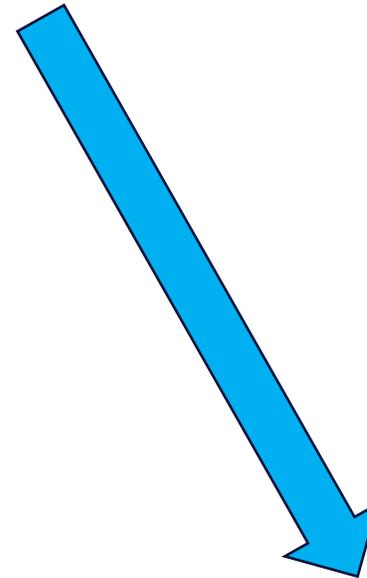
Public Information Session

February 2026

Division of Clean Energy Siting & Permitting

Live Interpretation Available

- **提供即時傳譯服務**
 - 點擊地球圖標選擇你的語言
- **提供实时口译服务**
 - 点击地球图标选择您的语言
- **Có Thông Dịch Theo Thời Gian Thực**
 - Nhấp vào Biểu Tượng Địa Cầu để chọn ngôn ngữ
- **Interpretação em direto disponível**
 - Clique no ícone do globo para selecionar seu idioma
- **Entèpretasyon An Dirèk Disponib**
 - Klike sou Ikòn Glòb la pou chwazi lang pa w
- **Interpretación en vivo disponible**
 - Haga clic en el icono del globo terráqueo para seleccionar su idioma



Zoom Functions

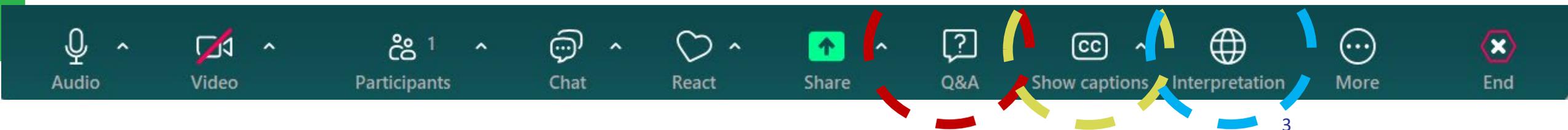
We will be using Zoom's Q & A Box to facilitate the Audience Q & A segment

- To ask a question: Click the Q & A icon on the Zoom toolbar

Turn on/off Zoom's auto-generated closed captions on the toolbar

Listen with live interpretation by clicking the globe icon on the toolbar

Don't see these options? Click "more"



Welcome & Introduction



Agenda (2-hour session)

- Welcome and Introduction
- Background on 2024 Climate Act
- Rulemaking Overview
- 225 CMR 29.00 Guidelines
- Applying Guidelines to Project Example
- Audience Question & Answer
- Next Steps & Wrap Up

Public Information Sessions

- This forum will explain how the proposed Guidelines support the Consolidated Local Permit Regulations for Small Clean Energy Infrastructure Facilities under 225 CMR 29.00
- We will keep track of comments and questions and incorporate feedback
- Please submit written comments on the Guidelines by March 13, 2026
 - **If you are interested in submitting comments on behalf of your community, please email comments as attached PDF files to DOER.Siting.Permitting@mass.gov or mail them to Division of Clean Energy Siting & Permitting, c/o Rick Collins, Director, 100 Cambridge Street, 9th Floor Boston, MA 02114**
- **Please note that these Public Information Sessions are solely on the Draft Guidelines for 225 CMR 29.00, and not the Regulations.**

Background



Why the Focus on Clean Energy?



MORE ABUNDANT ELECTRICITY

Demand is rising. Solar and storage facilities are relatively fast to build and provide cost-effective energy.



BENEFITS TO RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITIES

Reducing emissions will prevent 400 deaths, 25,000 days of missed work annually. Adding clean energy creates new jobs and economic development opportunities across Mass.



A MORE RESILIENT, RELIABLE, AFFORDABLE GRID

Increases our energy independence; reduces the need for dirty, expensive peaker plants; reduces long-term infrastructure costs



IT'S THE LAW

2008 Global Warming Solutions Act, 2018 Clean Energy Act, and 2024 Climate Act establish/restate requirement to reduce emissions to 80% of 1990 levels by 2050

Solution - 2024 Climate Law

- Biggest local permitting reform in a generation
- New optional consolidated permitting pathway
- Hard deadlines for decision making
- New process for evaluating site suitability, and needed minimization and mitigation
- One appeal pathway



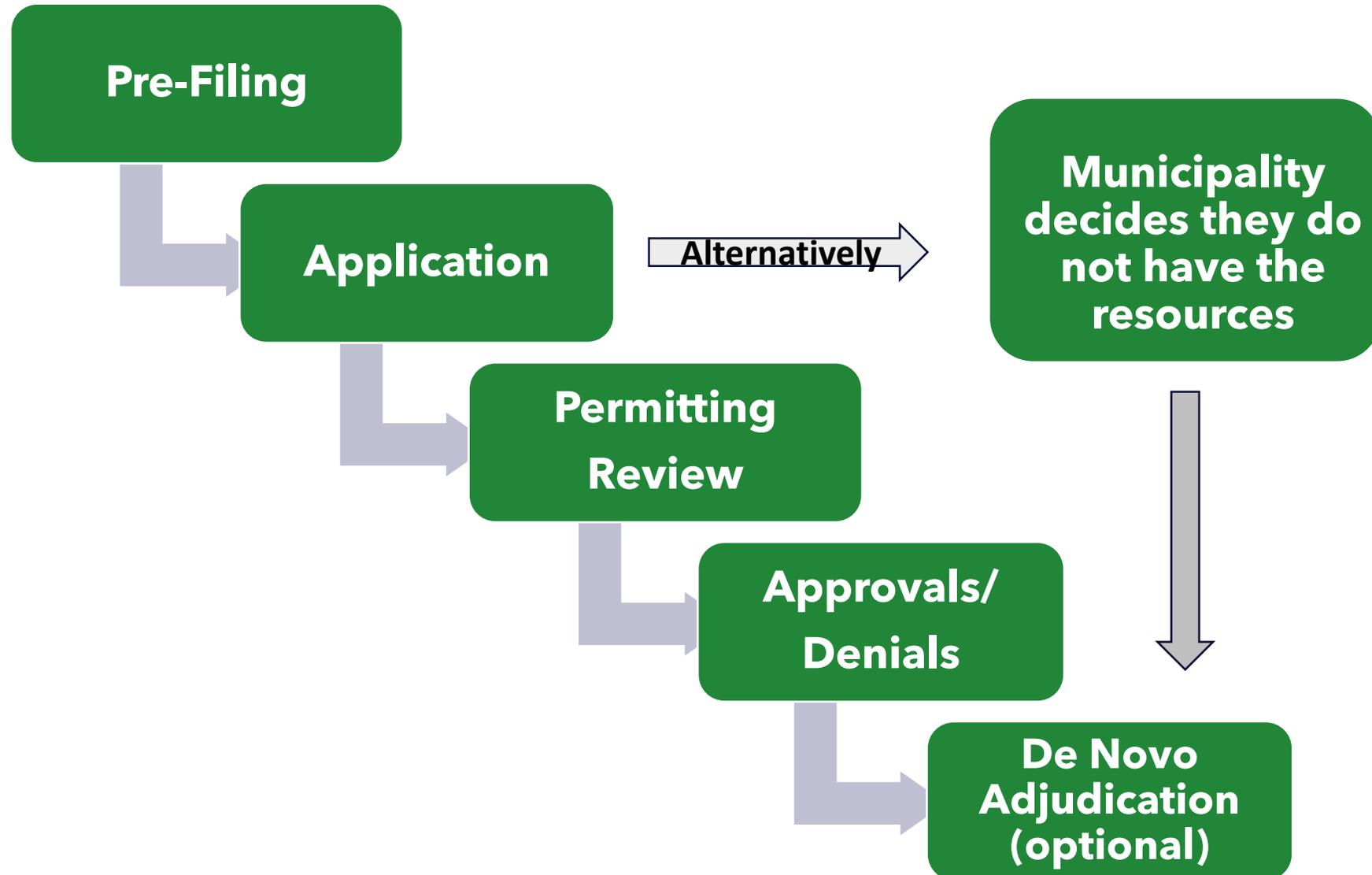
Our Charge - 2024 Climate Act

Siting and Permitting Reform

Two classifications of clean energy infrastructure projects

	Small	Large
Permitting Authority	Municipality	Energy Facility Siting Board
Generation	<25 MW	≥25 MW
Storage	<100 MWh	≥100 MWh
Transmission and Distribution	<1-mile long new corridor <10-mile long existing corridor	All other types (developers can also request EF SB to review Small Transmission and Distribution Projects)

The Consolidated Local Permitting Process



Our Charge - Siting and Permitting Reform

The 2024 Climate Act requires DOER to promulgate relevant regulations, including:

- Public health, safety, and environmental standards
- A common standard application for small clean energy facilities
- Pre-filing requirements, including requirements for public meetings and other forms of outreach
- Standards for applying site suitability guidance developed by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA)
- Common conditions and requirements for a single permit (constructive approval)
- Guidance for procedures and timelines
- Responsible parties subject to enforcement actions

Our Charge - Regulations and Guidelines

Siting and Permitting Reform

	Regulations	Guidelines
Definition	Have the force and effect of law. Created and enforced by executive branch agencies, which are given the rulemaking authority by the Legislature.	A set of clarifications, interpretations, and procedures, including forms, developed by the Department to assist in compliance.
Process to Issue and Amend	Procedure outlined via Ch. 30A (Administrative Procedures Act). Includes interagency review, Public Comment Period, and a Public Hearing	Interagency review and a 21-day comment period
DOER Documents	225 CMR 29.00	Guidelines include: Public Health, Safety & Environmental Standards; Common Conditions; Avoidance, Minimization and Mitigation; Pre-filing Stakeholder Engagement; Model Permitting Bylaw; Application

Timeline



Outreach and Engagement Strategy

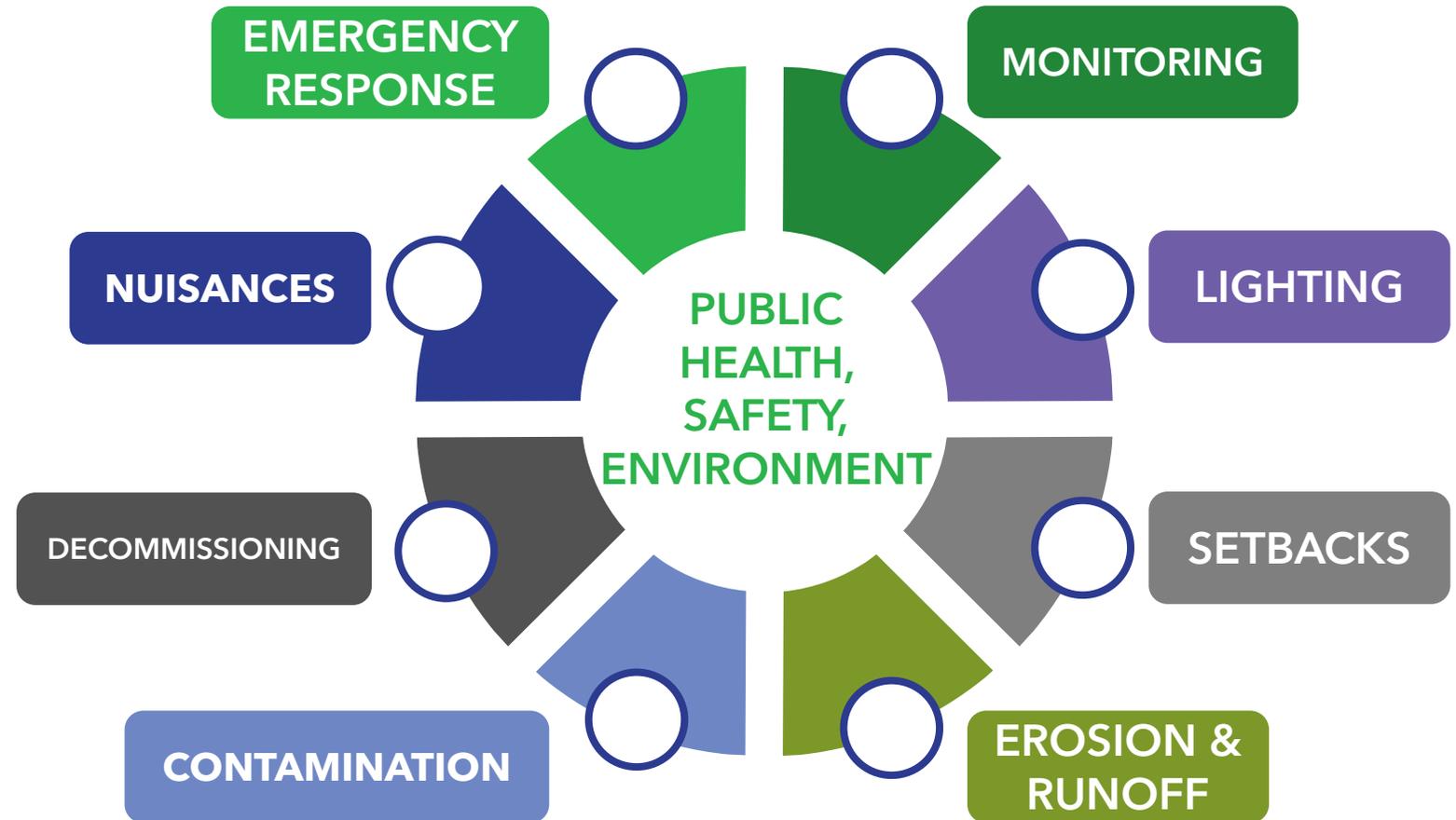
- January 21st – March 13th: Public Comment Period on the Guidelines
- Public Information Sessions: February 25th, February 27th, March 4th

Overview of Guidelines



Guideline on Public Health, Safety, and Environmental Standards

- Establishes baseline expectations for project design and operation
- Specifically states Applicants need to abide by Wetlands Protection Act, other DEP rules
- Munis are not prohibited from adopting additional standards
- All local laws still apply



Exemptions from Site Suitability and Pre-filing

Exempted Generation

- Generation with a site footprint ≤ 1 acre
- Front-of-meter Solar $\leq 25\text{kW AC}$
- Solar Canopies
- Behind-the-meter, accessory-use Generation
- Generation eligible for the ITC

Exempted Storage

- Front-of-meter Storage $\leq 250\text{kWh AC}$
- Behind-the-meter, accessory use Storage

Other Exemptions

- Small Transmission & Distribution in existing right of way



Pre-filing Stakeholder Engagement Regulation

By having developers give a good-faith effort up front, we'll save time and energy elsewhere in the process

1 MEET LOCAL OFFICIALS

- Help identify key local stakeholders
- Check plan accuracy
- Confirm all needed permits

2 PUBLIC OUTREACH

- Host a public meeting
- Talk with stakeholders
- Project info on website

3 CERTIFY STEPS

- Take feedback into consideration
- Outline steps taken



Guideline on Pre-filing Stakeholder Engagement



Language Access: Encourages Applicants to translate materials or hire translators if located in area of limited English proficiency



Municipal Staff Meeting: Discusses objectives of Meeting, such as confirming list of local stakeholders based on stakeholder reference form



Outreach and Noticing: Lists a variety of outreach and engagement tools Applicants can use such as website, mailers, small workshops, and where to advertise the session



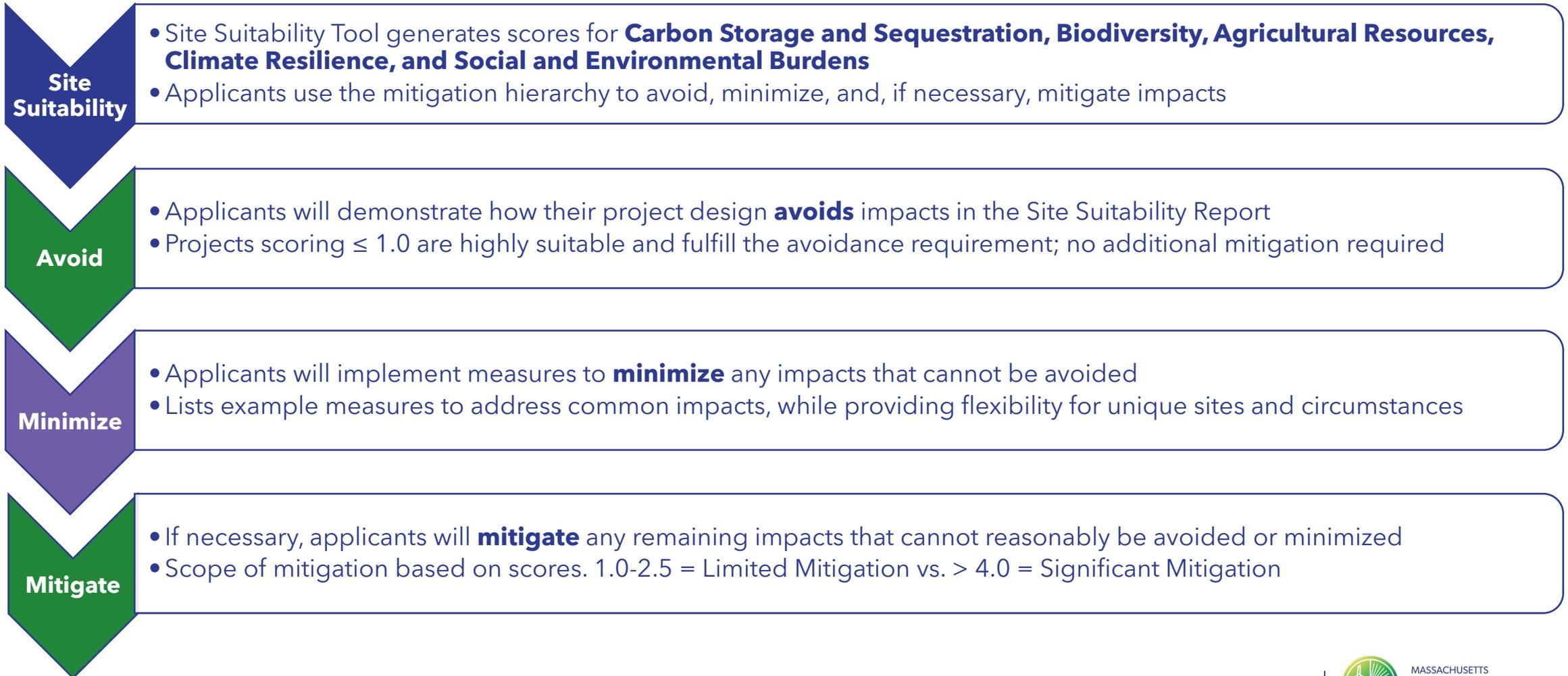
Information Session Facilitation: Provides suggestions for Public Information Session including times, locations, and meeting format best practices



Pre-filing Engagement Completion Checklist: Lists materials to include

Guideline on Avoidance, Minimization and Mitigation

- Provides guidance to avoid, minimize, and mitigate environmental and social impacts of projects
- Encourages projects on low-impact, pre-developed sites



Guideline on Common Conditions

- Constructive approval will occur when a municipality does not issue a decision within the 12-month timeframe
- Common Conditions were developed by DOER staff in coordination with the Energy Facilities Siting Board, and include conditions and requirements for the following topics:

Administrative and legal conditions

Conditions and requirements for construction

- (visual impact, vegetation, earthwork, etc.)

Conditions and requirements for operation and maintenance

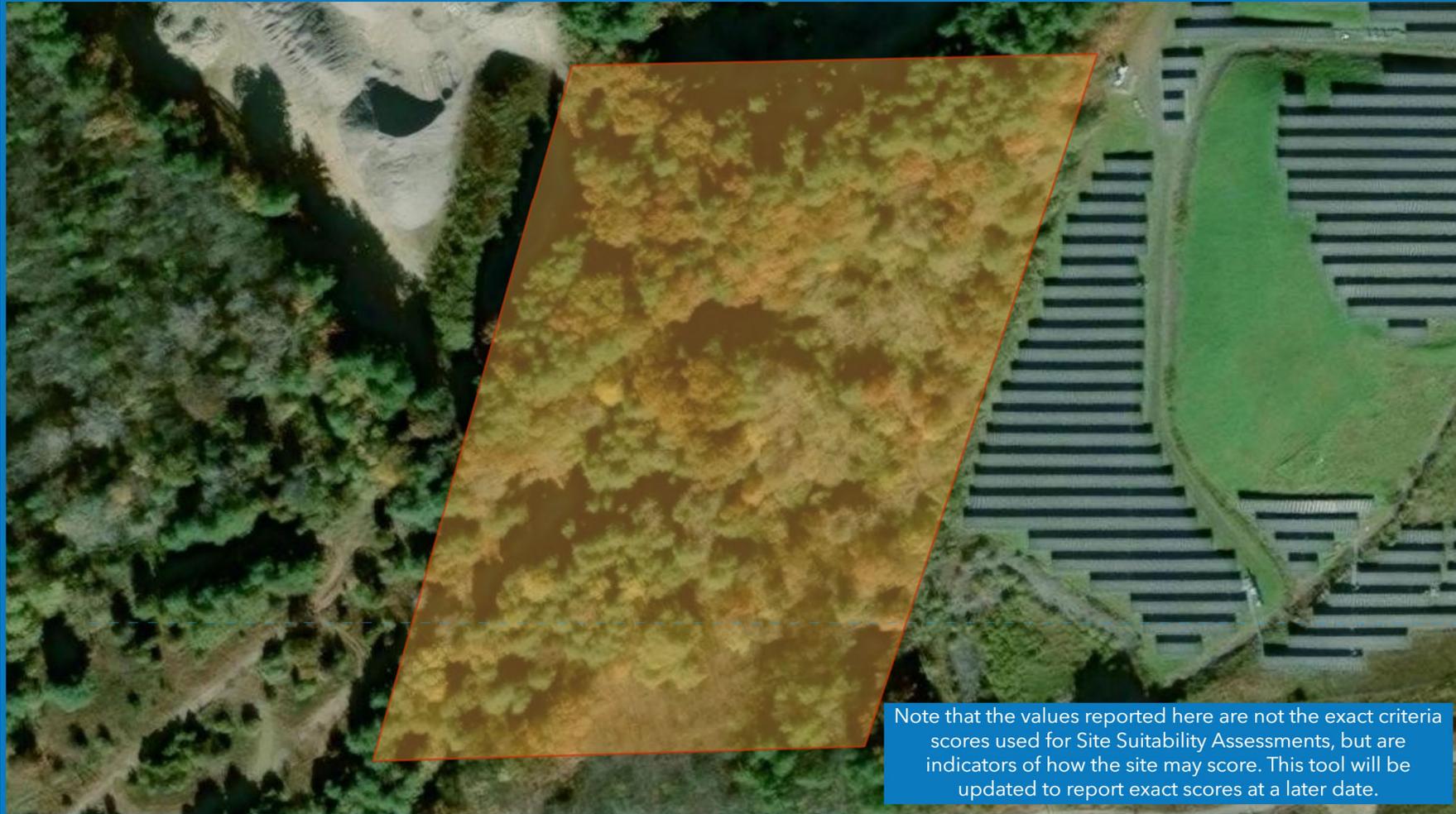
- (stormwater control, emergency response, hazmat storage, etc.)

Decommissioning

Projects will still be enforced by the Local Government

A Project Example





3.5

Average Ecosystem Carbon Index



0.1

Average Biodiversity Index



0.3

Average Agricultural Resources Index



48.1

MassEnviroScore



Example Pre-filing Stakeholder Engagement

During pre-filing meeting with staff, municipal staff recommends providing translated outreach materials



Applicant mails out notices in English and Spanish to Local Stakeholders



Applicant posts notices in English and Spanish at community center and public library, and pays for promoted posts on local Facebook page and the local newspaper



Applicant holds the Public Information Session on a weekday evening with light refreshments provided at the local community center



During the session, Applicant answers questions and incorporates feedback such as moving the access road location to mitigate disturbances to neighborhood



Applicant attaches copies of agenda, outreach materials and other required notices with Pre-filing Stakeholder Engagement Completion Checklist, which is signed by Local Government Representative

Example Application of Public Health, Safety, and Environmental Standards

Lighting: Limited, and avoids off-site lighting effects

Glare: Panels are arranged to minimize glare on abutting or nearby properties

Slope: Array built on land with a slope of less than 15 degrees

Landscaping: Natural vegetation was preserved to the extent possible; vegetative buffers were added to provide a visual barrier

Setbacks: Follows reasonable local requirements

Noise: SCEIF does not increase broadband sound by more than 10 decibels above ambient levels

Emergency Response: Applicant and municipality worked together to develop an ERP that includes a firefighting plan with suggested response procedures

Example Application of the Mitigation Guideline

Project receives 3.5/5 for Carbon Storage and Sequestration and 2.0/5 for Social and Environmental Burdens

Applicant develops a proposal to minimize and mitigate impacts to those criteria

Applicant consults Guideline while developing proposal

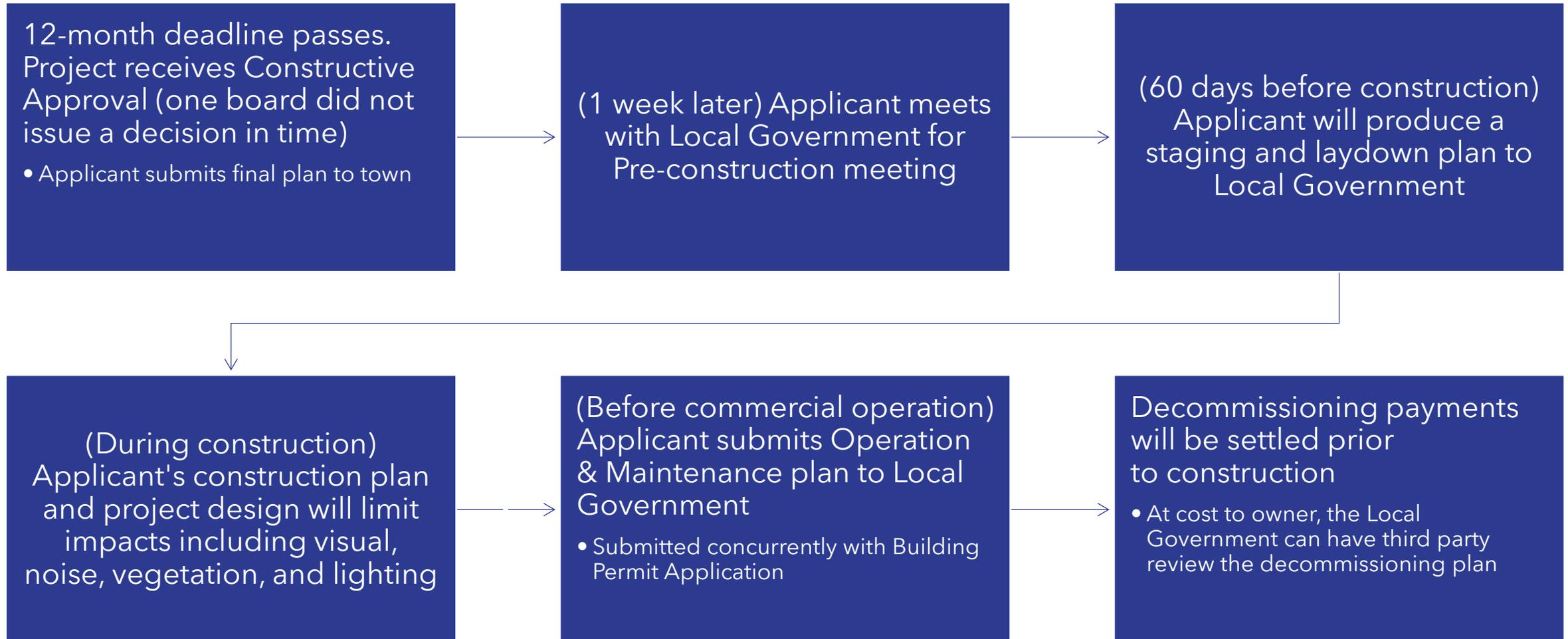
Proposal includes low-impact construction practices, revegetation w/native species, new conservation easement on neighboring forest, walking trail

Local Government Representative reviews proposal, determines if changes needed, discusses with Applicant.

LGR consults Guideline while reviewing proposal

Applicant and Local Government Representative memorialize agreement as a permit condition

Example Application of Common Conditions and Requirements



Audience Questions and Comments





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Thank You!

25A

Appendix



Our Goals and Approach

What we want these regulations to achieve

- Provide an efficient, consistent permitting pathway that:
 - Increases the amount of small clean energy infrastructure, allowing the Commonwealth to meet its emission goals
 - Respects the historic autonomy of cities and towns, while providing clear guidance, standards, and expectations
- Enable robust, productive, and collaborative engagement between applicants and stakeholder groups with meaningful outreach requirements early in the process
- Identify tools and programs needed by municipalities and applicants to improve technical understanding and procedural awareness of the law and new regulations, allowing everyone to confidently handle siting and permitting review