

Gina Bellato, Solar Program Manager  
Commissioner Patrick Woodcock  
Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources  
100 Cambridge Street  
Suite 1020  
Boston, MA 02114

via email: [DOER.SMART@mass.gov](mailto:DOER.SMART@mass.gov)

October 27, 2021

Re: Comments on the Proposed Agricultural Solar Tariff Generation Unit Guideline Changes

Dear Ms. Bellato and Commissioner Woodcock:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to the SMART Agricultural Solar Tariff Generation Unit (ASTGU) guidelines. We applaud the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) for incorporating the ASTGU option into the SMART program and believe that dual-use projects will have incredibly positive impacts on the Commonwealth and help the Commonwealth to achieve several of its most critical goals: greater deployment of solar energy generation and energy storage, revitalizing and protecting agricultural communities, and minimizing land use impacts associated with renewable energy development.

NextSun participated with a group of conservation organizations, farming organizations, solar energy advocates and solar developers to develop joint comments being submitted by the American Farmland Trust (AFT). NextSun supports the joint comments and emphasizes the importance of removing any implied yield requirement from the guidelines.

Proposed Section 6(i) has the effect of creating an agricultural yield requirement, which is not supported by the regulations and **directly contradicts DOER's Straw Proposal from September 2020 which stated that "No yield requirements will be instituted"** (page 5). The requirement to obtain a waiver for a decrease in production for any reason, including reasons not at all related to the dual-use project (e.g. drought, storms, insects, etc.), would inherently place a project into "default" under the program. The prospect of having a project be in default due to decreased yield would create enormous uncertainty for ASTGU projects and prevent ASTGU projects from being able to obtain financing. The concept of a yield requirement should be removed entirely from the guidelines.

Sincerely,



Adam Schumaker  
VP, Development  
NextSun Energy LLC