

Dear Senate Chair Barrett, House Chair Roy and Members of the TUE Committees,  
I urge the committees to report the following bills favorably out of committee:

- H.3225/S.2150 An Act to encourage solar development on buildings and disturbed land
- H.3144 / S.2089 An Act promoting solar energy canopies on large parking lots
- H3230 / S2164: Acts Allowing Municipalities to Reasonably Regulate Solar Siting
- H3229 / S.2163 An Act prohibiting public and ratepayer funding of clearcutting forests and woodlands
- H3187/S2113 An Act relative to energy facilities siting improvement to address environmental justice, climate, and public health

I was cheered to attend virtually the two hearings this week (June 20 & 21, 2023), where I heard the Sierra Club, Elders Climate Action, Mass. Audubon, and even some solar installers speaking in support of bills to incentivize solar on buildings and over parking lots. Whenever there is a conversation about siting solar, my neighbors lament that there is no infrastructure to prioritize placing solar arrays on commercial roofs, on brownfields, and over parking lots. These would not only produce green energy, but also provide cooling as they shade spaces that currently add to the urban heat island effect. As a member of the River Valley Market food cooperative, I was delighted that our new store in Easthampton incorporated solar panels over the parking area. But it should be possible to site arrays like this on existing buildings and parking lots rather than require new construction. Some of the solar installers who testified pointed out their expertise and willingness to work with clients and agencies to make these types of projects possible. Our commonwealth needs much more of this because, even if it were not an unconscionable waste of natural resources, we simply don't have enough acres of forests to clear cut or croplands to disturb for us to meet our climate goals with ground-mounted arrays.

As much as we need to marshal incentives for solar development, our communities also need the authority to determine the best locations for ground-mounted solar. Right now communities are effectively prevented from setting reasonable restrictions, for fear of being sued. The town of Shutesbury is a case in point. When they recently passed protective regulations, they were promptly sued--as highlighted in a column in the [Daily Hampshire Gazette](#). Several people from Shutesbury were among those who testified in favor of H.3230/ S.2164, which would establish a municipality's right to reasonably regulate solar power locations and prevent exploitative and massively destructive solar development practices.

I would also like to applaud the commenters who recommended reforming the energy facilities siting process to focus consideration on environmental justice and public health, as well as to assure that communities have early notice and a voice in siting new projects.

I appreciate the bills my legislators, Rep. Lindsay Sabadosa and Sen. Jo Comerford, filed and/or cosponsored on these points, as well as the time they took to testify at these hearings.

Respectfully submitted June 23, 2023 by

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