



PRESS RELEASE-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 27, 2021

Groups challenge Massachusetts SMART solar subsidies, strip mining and deforestation in Southeastern Massachusetts

Contact: Meg Sheehan, Community Land & Water Coalition, c. 508-259-9154,
environmentwatchesoutheasternma@gmail.com

Melissa Harding Ferretti, Chairlady and President, Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe
melissa@herringpondtribe.org

Local residents and groups are challenging Massachusetts' "SMART" solar subsidy program and demanding a full environmental impact report (EIR) under the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) for three new ground-mounted solar utilities in the Town of Wareham that will clear-cut and strip mine almost 200 acres of pristine, globally rare Pine Barrens forest.

[Community Land & Water Coalition \(CLWC\)](#), Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe, members of Mashpee Wampanoag and over [450 individuals](#) sent comments to the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Theoharides demanding an end to subsidies and a full EIR for the projects. CLWC is also demanding a full forensic accounting of the volume of earth removed by AD Makepeace Company of Wareham (ADM) as "site preparation" for nine existing solar projects and from the company's active strip mining sites in Carver, Wareham and Plymouth. ADM and Borrego Solar Systems, Inc. (Borrego) have been working together for ten years to site ground-mounted solar projects that have clear-cut and strip mined about 300 acres of pristine, globally rare Pine Barrens forests.

"Over the last ten years, the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) has used taxpayer funds to subsidize the destruction of the Massachusetts Pine Barrens— one of only three in the

world and home to 220 unique plants and animals. This is a false solution to the climate crisis. In addition, the use of the ruse of clean energy to strip mine valuable silica sand for commercial sale and put in solar is devastating our region and the Plymouth Carver Sole Source Aquifer” said Meg Sheehan of Plymouth, a volunteer attorney for the group.

“The destruction of our unceded Wampanoag lands by these projects violate our Indigenous sovereignty and human rights,” said Melissa Harding Ferretti, President and Chairlady of the Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe based in Plymouth.

Comments from Partnership for Policy Integrity (PFPI) describe the three Wareham projects and others as a “failure” of the state’s energy policy. The PFPI research report to MEPA states, “it is shocking to see that the state’s renewable energy policy is actually incentivizing forest clearing for solar.”

On May 24, 2021, minutes after the public submitted comments to MEPA at the close of business, MEPA announced that Borrego Solar and AD Makepeace were granted a second extension to “supplement” their environmental report. “This is the oldest trick in the book,” Sheehan said. “This second extension gives the developers a second bite at the apple while MEPA still has not made the full environmental record available for the public to review. This cover-up and misuse of taxpayer funds is undermining the Commonwealth’s ability to address climate change and build resilient communities. We have lost too much biodiversity, forests and our heritage already. Addressing climate change means saving our forests, not destroying them.”

****END****