

Paul Foley

From: Luanne Johnson [LuanneJ@biodiversityworksmv.org]
Sent: Wednesday, August 31, 2016 5:42 PM
To: Paul Foley
Subject: Oak Bluffs Water District Solar Array

Dear Mr. Foley,

I am writing to oppose the revised Oak Bluffs Water District Solar Array Project, which proposes to clear 10.5 acres of oak woodland adjacent to the State Forest for a solar energy project.

Solar and other renewable energy sources are important to reducing our reliance on fossil fuels and decreasing carbon emissions. However, renewable energy projects should not result in net loss of conservation land on Martha's Vineyard. While I appreciate the efforts of Blue Wave to show that the solar array will provide a net benefit in carbon sequestration, that is not the only service this oak woodland provides for Martha's Vineyard.

The proposed parcel of land for the solar array project is a designated water re-charge area and it is currently on the map as conservation land. The forest at this site provides a variety ecological services for our island community and wildlife: (1) the forest and shrubs provide water recharge and filtering as part of a large, contiguous forest in that area, which benefit aquifer re-charge, (2) the oak trees and understory provide habitat for a variety of wildlife ranging from songbirds and small mammals (including bats that are threatened with extinction) to hawks and owls, (3) this ancient oak woodland sequesters carbon, (4) situated between the head of the Lagoon and a large tract of forest designated for conservation, this ancient forest parcel provides connectivity for wildlife traveling between the head of the Lagoon (fresh water) and the State Forest.

There are many unused rooftops with good solar gain around the island and in our towns, or I believe there are ruderal areas already clear of forest where solar panels could be situated without causing net loss of forest on the Island.

Thank you for your time,

Sincerely,

Luanne Johnson

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Luanne Johnson, Ph.D.
Director/Wildlife Biologist
BiodiversityWorks

www.biodiversityworksmv.org

[800-690-0993](tel:800-690-0993)

LuanneJ@biodiversityworksmv.org