

To: Martha's Vineyard Commission

RE: Siting of Solar Farm

My name is Peter Kreitler. I have spent a portion of every summer of my 74 years at the exact same location on Cape Cod; 8 Mill Road, Harwich port. My environmental ethic was developed there as I began to understand the remarkable inter-play of water, eel grass, beach grass, sand, seaweed, horseshoe crabs, etc. and human activity. To this day I am indebted to this experience as it defines who I am, and has made me keenly aware that every action I take and every decision I make has an environmental consequence.

As a priest of the Episcopal church since 1970, and as a full time environmental educator since 1990, and the host and producer of the longest running environmental talk show, Earth Talk Today, I am familiar with the pro's and con's of many environmental projects. Yes, I am a strong advocate for alternative energy sources, especially solar power. 15 years ago I installed 6.5 kw on the roof of our winter home in Southern California; (plus, only organic fertilizers, low flow toilets and showers, drought tolerant plants). Science reminds us that the sun can and should be the ultimate source of our energy, yet the siting of the panels which collect that energy must be carefully considered as we have a finite planet.

Clearcutting old growth forests today has both a practical and symbolic significance. In the West Coast we have seen vast tracks of ancient forests decimated, yet it all begins with a single acre. Cutting old growth for whatever purpose renders the project proposed on those acres invalid as a 'green project.' We have witnessed this in our country, as well as most poignantly in the Amazon region. Humans are unable to create that which 8 billion years of evolution have provided us. A forest is more than the sum of its parts, and to replace the under-brush, displace the resident fauna, and compromise the integrity of the eco-system is a serious violation today of the mandate to till and care for creation; or in the Hebrew avodah and shomer – keep and serve. Destroying a gift incapable of being re-created for metal, wires, glass, and a complex infrastructure goes against our human responsibility to sustain creation.

We are remiss if we take another "green acre" when the project could be sited on private roofs, brownfield sites, commercial buildings, or government complexes. Hooray for an emerging technology that I have fully embraced and congratulations to the pioneers who paved the way; however, please consider the alternative sites and never ever consider taking that which we cannot create.

The Earth is our fragile island home, and in microcosm the island of Marth's Vineyard may signal the future story unfolding before us. When islands lead the people will follow; and we are seeing island nations in the Pacific impacted by sea level rise begin to lead the world-wide discussion on this emerging challenge. May Martha's Vineyard lead in preserving that which cannot be replaced; ever! The common good will be modeled in a tangible way for generations to applaud, Thank you.

Sincerely,

*Peter G. Kreitler*

The Rev. Canon Peter Gwillim Kreitler