Paul Foley

From: Tim Boland [tim@pollyhillarboretum.org]
Sent: Monday, August 29, 2016 11:30 AM
To: Paul Foley
Subject: Revised OB Solar Plan at the Water District

Dear Paul,

I looked over the applicants revised submission for the project and also their argument and facts and figures in regards to mitigation.

The mitigation rationale does not make sense at all to me, its comparing apples to oranges. There is no validation for the removal of an existing ancient forest on a finite landmass, particularly on a critical water resource area.

Forests are not expanding on the Vineyard, but shrinking.

The revised plan and formulaic mitigation models fail principally for the following reasons:

. They fail to recognize in all cases the inherent value of "living forests".

. They are not replanting forests here – especially one that is ancient – so no real mitigation here based on the loss of a living forest. Irreplaceable.

· We are on an Island with a finite amount of living forest – we are currently losing forest

· This is an ancient forest - it has existed continuously since the last glacial period over 10,000 years ago. This forest borders the rarest ecosystem in the commonwealth of Massachusetts. Habitat fragmentation is the leading cause of the loss of biodiversity along with DEVELOPMENT. A utility is development. You are fragmenting a forest.

· We can expect more troubles or impacts on MV forests from climate change causes. Forest pests and diseases escalation is happening all over the world. The Island has witnessed this from the recent fall canker worm explosion to the cynipid wasp die off of our predominantly oak forest. These are vivid recent occurrences. Winter moth is moving out of our harbor town areas to the rural wooded areas of the Vineyard. This is an inevitable and unavoidable occurrence, the next great forest stress. The other great forest stress with climate change is what is occurring right now – Drought. We can expect more drought impacting our forests in the future.

· In relationship to drought, when you remove a living forest you are disrupting and removing the natural hydrological cycle that forest provide.

· Forests and their root systems with their long standing association with soil fungi and microbes are the ultimate water purification system. When forests are removed, runoff and erosion increases – two water quality threats.

· The genus Quercus (the oaks as a group) have the largest association of insects, amphibians, birds and other wildlife dependent on them in North America. They are known worldwide as ecosystem pillars – holding together a close association of living biota co-dependent on each other for their livelihood. Irreplaceable.

· Finally - Forests are alive – solar panels are not. The ecosystem services of living forests far outweigh the single carbon sequestering model put forth here.

Looking back at the Island Plan and the conversations that went on at the time, clearly natural resources are limited on an Island. Developments like these belong in waste areas or areas that have been debilitated and do not have natural occurring ecosystem services. Rooftops, abandoned gravel pits, old landfills, anywhere where their impact is limited.

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