

WHY A MORATORIUM PETITION ON LARGE GROUND MOUNTED SOLAR?

Massachusetts' energy laws and policies are subsidizing and promoting the destruction of forests and farmland for large, industrial solar projects. Big corporations are clear-cutting forests, destroying farmland, filling wetlands, polluting rivers, contributing to biodiversity extinction and desecrating Indigenous cultural sites.

So far, over 4,000 acres have been clear-cut for large solar projects. The state is targeting **another 100,000 acres**.¹ Forest clear-cuts are often in core habitat, critical natural landscapes and near wetlands and rivers. We need intact forests, not clear-cuts, to protect our water and native biodiversity as species are going extinct here in Massachusetts.

Large solar development is being done **recklessly**. In 2021, the Attorney General fined two solar developers and Eversource over \$1.4 million for **polluting rivers and destroying wetlands**. In July, 2021 solar developer Grasshopper Energy **destroyed a Native American cultural site** in Hopkinton. **Borrego Solar desecrated King Philip's Cave in Freetown in 2016** and maybe more sacred sites. Small communities are being targeted by big corporations and lack the capacity to deal with big corporations pushing these projects.

A MORATORIUM IS A TIME OUT

A moratorium is temporary. It will:

- Temporarily stop the state from using taxpayer and ratepayer money to finance large solar projects; privately financed projects are not affected. A private landowner can build solar and municipalities can issue approvals under their laws. It is only state-financed large solar projects that are under the moratorium.
- Allow municipalities to consider bylaws to best address their residents concerns about solar
- Allow the public and experts time to work with lawmakers and regulators to fix the problems with the state's energy policy
- Protect our forests, water, wildlife, biodiversity, farmland and Native American sacred sites from more reckless solar development
- Allow rooftops or existing infrastructure -- 80% of US energy needs can be met by rooftop solar.
- Allow solar on land up to 5 acres -- electricity for 190 homes so long as the land has not been cleared in the last 5 years.

¹ <https://www.massaudubon.org/our-conservation-work/advocacy/alternative-energy/solar> ;
<https://savethepinebarrens.org/resources-2/>

