



Berkshire Environmental Action Team

Protecting the Environment for Wildlife



February 23, 2015

--- SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY VIA NMS.taskforce@massmail.state.ma.us

Re: Comment to the Net Metering and Solar Task Force

Dear Net Metering and Solar Task Force members,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment to the Net Metering and Solar Task Force.

Berkshire Environmental Action Team, Inc. (BEAT) is a non-profit whose mission is to protect the environment for wildlife in support of the natural systems that sustain us all.

Solar power has been immensely successful in Massachusetts reducing fossil fuel use, providing a zero-fuel-cost electric energy source, diversifying our electricity generating fuel mix (a very high priority according to ISO-New England), making our electric grid more resilient in the face of the more intense storms we are receiving, and creating strong job and economic growth. Solar power is an industry we want to expand and grow.

To continue the solar industry growth and expand access to solar power, further policy change is required. For residents who are renters, lack adequate credit, or who cannot site solar on their property, community shared solar provides an avenue for tapping into the full benefits of the clean energy economy.

Through time-of-use pricing, demand response, and consumer education, we can encourage storage charging during typical low-demand hours and reduce peak demand to smooth out our energy use curve.

Please:

1. Lift the cap on solar net metering. Preferably eliminate the cap altogether, but at a minimum raise the cap to 1,600 MW immediately and 10,000 MW by 2025. Exempt Solar PV systems of 1MW or smaller from the net metering cap.
2. Encourage expanded access to solar by incentivizing community shared solar projects for the 80% of the residents of the state who are unable to participate in direct ownership of solar PV at their home due to shading, tenancy, or other barriers. Keep virtual net metering at retail rates for all community shared solar projects.

2. Set a 20% solar electrical generation by 2025 target for Massachusetts. So far over 350 municipal officials have pledged to support this goal. We need to replace fossil fuel generators as quickly as possible.
3. Direct the Department of Public Utilities to initiate/expand an energy storage program and explore ways the electric vehicle program can support an energy storage program.
4. Pursue Time of Use metering for encouraging energy efficiency, balancing the electrical load and compensating renewable energy.
5. Direct the Department of Public Utilities to initiate/expand a demand response program in which homeowners as well as businesses can participate.
6. Take advantage of the 30% federal Tax Credit before it expires Dec 2016 to cover as many rooftops as possible with solar panels.

Thank you for considering BEAT's comments.

Sincerely,



Jane Winn