



The Trustees of Reservations
200 High Street | Boston, MA 02110

June 7, 2021

Via Email selectmen@wareham.ma.us

Judith Whiteside, Chair
Wareham Board of Selectmen
Memorial Town Hall
54 Marion Road
Wareham, MA 02571

Re: Opposition to industrial-scale solar development and mining in Wareham

Dear Chair Whiteside and Members of the Wareham Selectboard,

The Trustees of Reservations is concerned over the proliferation of industrial-scale solar in Wareham, and the mining of earth, sand, soil, and gravel to prepare sites for solar installations. So far, millions of cubic yards of topsoil and sand have been removed to develop 300 acres of ground mounted solar, and solar is being planned for an additional 1,500 acres in globally rare pine forest.

While The Trustees supports renewable energy development to mitigate climate impacts, we encourage solar on rooftops, highways, parking lots, brownfields, industrial complexes, and other developed lands; and oppose large scale solar that requires the removal of forested land and that impacts rivers, streams, wetlands and other critical natural resources – especially resources that are drawing and storing carbon pollution out of the atmosphere, creating climate resiliency, and protecting fish and wildlife habitat and drinking water supplies.

We are particularly concerned about the large-scale solar developments in Wareham because of their impacts on the local aquifer – the only source of fresh water for the region. The pine barrens are delicate landscapes; the sandy soils and trees are vital to naturally filter the groundwater that supplies Wareham residents and businesses with drinking water.

Strip mining and industrial solar developments in the pine barrens are exacerbating habitat fragmentation, removing and displacing plant and animal species from the area, and threatening nearby rivers, streams, and natural areas, including the Red Brook Wildlife Management Area and The Trustees' Lyman Reserve. The reserve sits at the mouth of Red Brook, a 4.5-mile spring-fed, cold-water stream that flows from White Island Pond to Buttermilk Bay – a critical estuary and shellfish production area. Red Brook is one of the few coastal streams in the state that supports anadromous

fish and is home to one of the last remaining native sea-run Brook Trout fisheries in the Eastern US. The historic and live herring runs in Red Brook also contribute to the region's recreational fishing economy as they are a primary food source for stripe bass and other coastal fish.

The impacts of industrial scale solar development on these already impacted and sensitive resources will likely result in an irreversible collapse of the region's unique ecosystems and will detrimentally impact quality of life for Wareham residents. We urge the Town of Wareham to pause these industrial projects, and to identify and pursue already-developed areas for solar developments, for the benefit of nature and future generations.

If you have questions, please contact me at toshea@thetrustees.org. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Thomas K. O'Shea
Managing Director of Resources and Planning

Founded in 1891 by Charles Eliot, The Trustees preserves, for public use and enjoyment, properties of exceptional scenic, historic, and ecological value in Massachusetts. Today, 130 years after our founding, we are Massachusetts' largest conservation and preservation organization and with the support of our 150,000 members we care for 120 properties—nearly 27,000 irreplaceable acres. The Trustees works with a variety of volunteer, nonprofit, and community-based partners in communities across the state to preserve remarkable, scenic landscapes and historic and cultural resources. thetrustees.org