



Southeastern Massachusetts Chapter

June 3, 2021

Peter Teitelbaum, Esq., Chair  
Wareham Board of Selectmen  
Memorial Town Hall  
54 Marion Road  
Wareham, MA 02571

Dear Chairman Teitelbaum:

The Southeastern Massachusetts Chapter of Trout Unlimited, the local affiliate of Trout Unlimited a national nonprofit organization with more than 300,000 members devoted to protecting coldwater fisheries and their habitat in North America, wishes to express with this letter our support for the proposed Article 17 of the Wareham bylaws limiting the size of ground-mounted solar installations.

The Southeast Chapter, with members from around the region including Wareham, remains committed to the continued progress of healthy, self-sustaining populations of wild Sea Run Brook Trout for all coastal regions of the Commonwealth. As I'm sure you are aware, TU along with partners, such as the Trustees of Reservations, Mass Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, the Sea Run Brook Trout Coalition, the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, has for the past 30 years has worked to restore and sustain Red Brook as a stronghold for these special fish.

Article 17 allows for a pause and policy reset for the sake of common sense. Existing state and local laws have created a situation whereby mature forestlands that are well suited for reducing carbon concentrations in the atmosphere over the long term are being clear-cut and replaced with ground-mounted solar panels. In Wareham in particular, the loss to citizens and the important (and in some places rare) habitats is then exacerbated by the practice of strip-mining sands and gravel as part of the process. Please refer to the Appendix. The resulting alterations of the landscape upset the natural flows of surface water and reduce the ability of exposed and overburden soils to filter contaminants before they enter and flow with the aquifer.

Reasonable alternatives exist. The practice of strip-mining square miles of forest followed by solar panel installation is detrimental to fish and wildlife, an eyesore to residents and visitors to Wareham and creates an unhealthy strain on the sole source aquifer that sustains your citizenry and coldwater fisheries. Just as Wareham is blessed with an abundance of undeveloped forested pine barren uplands, wetland lowlands and vernal pools, it is also home to a substantial array of commercially or industrially developed and otherwise disturbed lands where solar installations can be added on to existing uses.

The citizens of Wareham expect more. As the recent vote on the zoning change proposed by the NOTOS Group indicates, your voters expect the town's leaders to take any and all steps to plan carefully and thoughtfully so as to balance economic stability with thoughtful stewardship of the varied natural habitat within the community.

We ask that you support Article 17 and the path for Wareham that your voters have laid for you where green truly means green.

Please feel free to contact me or any member of Trout Unlimited in Massachusetts if you think we can be of further assistance.

Respectfully Submitted,

*[signed]*

Matthew R. Hoagland, President  
Southeastern Chapter, Trout Unlimited

cc. Wareham Planning Board

# Appendix

