

Western Massachusetts Solar Forum

Session 4: Perspectives on Solar

Speaker Bios



Aaron Nelson
Project Manager
Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust

Aaron Nelson is a Project Manager at Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, a regional land trust which serves 23 towns in north central Massachusetts, where he works directly with landowners, municipalities and other partners to protect significant agricultural, natural, and scenic lands. He received his B.A. in International Affairs from George Washington University, with a concentration in International Environmental Studies. Aaron grew up and lives in Ashfield, MA and currently serves as the chair of Ashfield's Conservation Commission.



Ashley Randle
Commissioner
MA Department of Agricultural Resources

A fifth-generation dairy farmer, Ashley E. Randle was sworn in as the twenty-first Commissioner by Governor Maura T. Healey on March 6, 2023. She is the first woman to lead the Department and assumed the role after having served as Deputy Commissioner/Legislative and Policy Director since October 2018.



Cinda Jones
President
WD Cows Land Company

Cinda Jones is a community investor and environmental steward. She appreciates the opportunity and responsibility she has in this generation to assure sustainability for her family business and the planet. Cinda's focus has been managing working forests, conserving thousands of acres of land, and hosting solar.

Claire Chang

**Co-owner
Greenfield Solar**

As an Installer of residential and small commercial solar PV systems throughout the Pioneer Valley since 2009 working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide access to 100% renewable energy generation is my focus and motivation. I participate in the Commonwealth's climate and solar legislation and policies to ensure equity access for all.



Courtney Feeley Karp

**Senior Counsel
Klavens Law Group, P.C.**

Courtney Feeley Karp serves as senior counsel of Klavens Law Group, P.C. She brings an insider's knowledge of Massachusetts clean energy programs from her years serving as counsel for the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) in the Renewable Energy and Green Communities Division, as well as for the Massachusetts Senate Ways and Means Committee. She assists clients in understanding and leveraging federal and state renewable energy incentives, draft and negotiate a broad range of energy transaction documents, and advised clients on asset management strategies, including ongoing relationships with offtakers and utilities.



Jeff Roy

**State Representative
Massachusetts House of Representatives**

"State Representative Jeffrey N. Roy was first elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives for the 10th Norfolk District in 2012. It is his great honor and privilege to represent the residents of Franklin and Medway on Beacon Hill. He was appointed Chairperson of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy. He is the House-Chair of the Manufacturing Caucus, which promotes and encourages "Making It" in Massachusetts. In 2011, he was elected to the Town Council in the Franklin, Massachusetts. In January 2012, he was selected to chair the town's Master Plan Committee. Prior to that, he served on the School Committee, and served as its Chairperson for 9 of his 10 years of service with that board. He also co-chaired Franklin's Anti-Bullying Task Force. He has worked as an attorney in Massachusetts since 1986, and operates a law firm, Roy Law, in Franklin, Massachusetts. The firm is dedicated to vindicating the rights and expectations of consumers injured at home, work, or play. He has represented clients at all levels of the trial and appellate courts in Massachusetts. In addition, he has appeared in cases before the New Hampshire Supreme Court and

Superior Court, the Federal District Courts of Massachusetts and New Hampshire, the Rhode Island Superior Court, Colorado Superior Court, and the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. He is also a member of the American Association for Justice (AAJ) and the Massachusetts Bar Association. He is also a bicycle rider in the annual Pan-Mass Challenge event, which raises money for the Jimmy Fund."



Jill Buchanan
Member of Smart Solar Shutesbury
Smart Solar Shutesbury

Jill Buchanan has over 25 years' experience as a communications leader in nonprofit and higher education institutions. She is a clean energy advocate in her town of Shutesbury, MA, and beyond.



John Rogers
Senior Energy Analyst
Union of Concerned Scientists

John Rogers is a senior energy analyst at the Union of Concerned Scientists, with expertise in clean energy technologies and policies and a focus on solar and wind. He serves on the boards of directors of RENEW Northeast and the Renewable Energy Wildlife Institute. Prior to joining UCS in 2006, John had worked for 15 years on private and public clean energy initiatives internationally, including promoting solar in unelectrified rural areas of Latin America as a US Peace Corps Volunteer. He earned a bachelor's degree at Princeton University and a master's degree in mechanical engineering at the University of Michigan.



Kelley Fike
Director, Civil Engineering
Nexamp, Inc.

Kelley Fike is a professional civil engineer with 5+ years of solar industry experience. She is a Western Mass resident and worked with the UMass Clean Energy Extension to get the first pollinator site certified in Massachusetts. She is deeply grateful for the opportunity to help drive a clean energy future for the next generation.



Margaret Christie

Special Projects Director

CISA (Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture)

Margaret Christie, CISA's Special Projects Director, is instrumental in new project development at CISA, including building CISA's Climate Program and supporting the growth of infrastructure and services for local food and farm businesses. She served as CISA's Executive Director from 1997-1999, when the Local Hero program was launched. Prior to joining CISA, Margaret worked for the University of Massachusetts Integrated Pest Management Program and the Northeast Organic Farmers Association, Massachusetts chapter. She has a master's degree in Rural Sociology from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and a bachelor's degree in sustainable agriculture from The Evergreen State College.



Michael DeChiara

Planning Board (member); Energy and Climate Action Committee (chair)
Town of Shutesbury

Michael DeChiara lives in Shutesbury, MA – a rural town of 1,700. He is the primary author of the last three versions of the town's solar bylaw, including the 2023 bylaw that passed with near unanimous consent. He is the Chair of the Shutesbury Energy and Climate Action Committee. Michael is also the moving force behind bills before the legislature to modify state law to allow municipalities to reasonably regular large scale solar development. Almost 45 years ago as a college freshman, Michael wrote an essay on solar energy, and in the 1980s and 1990s worked with Greenpeace as the organization began to focus on fossil fuels and atmospheric damage. It has been a long road watching the evolution of the climate crisis, unfortunately the challenges of changing policy continues.



Mindy Domb

State Representative

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Mindy Domb is the State Representative for the 3rd Hampshire District which includes the town of Amherst and half of the town of Granby. She is in her third term and serves as the House Chair of the Joint Committee on Tourism, Arts and Cultural Development. She is grateful to the Clean Energy Extension for their leadership and willingness to support our communities to participate in solar development decisions.



Shaun Suhoski

**Town Manager
Town of Athol**

Nearly 30 years of public-sector experience as chief administrative officer and in community and economic development. Mr. Suhoski holds a juris doctorate from New England Law - Boston and a bachelors degree from Fitchburg State University.



Steph Speirs

**CEO
Solstice**

Steph is the Co-Founder and CEO at Solstice, which connects households and businesses to community solar farms and clean energy. Steph serves on the Board of Directors of the Sierra Club Foundation, Clean Energy for America and Vote Solar, the Advisory Boards of the Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy and the Climate Council for Bloomberg's New Economy Forum. She previously deployed solar microgrids, lanterns, and home systems in India and Pakistan. She was selected as EY New England's Entrepreneur of the Year, C3E's Entrepreneur Award, Inc Magazine's Female Founder 100, and Elle's US Woman Entrepreneur of the Year. She holds degrees from Yale, Princeton, and MIT.