

Western Massachusetts Solar Forum – Session 4 Attendee Q&A Questions/Comments

The following are questions received from Attendees during Session 4. These questions have been shared with Session 4 speakers to inform them of the engagement and issues of interest to the community. We are not asking or expecting the speakers to offer direct answers to these questions. The Clean Energy Extension and our partners are also using these questions to inform the agenda for the anticipated Part II of the forum in 2024. Thank you for these questions.

1. In Session 1, we heard the state will use some of the federal money to develop a bylaw template, vetted by the AGO's office, to guide towns in drafting solar bylaws that meet the state's goal. Who is tasked with that work? Has that been started?
2. Existing ASTGU Guideline Language: Revised April 12, 2022: 1. 2) No newly created farmland footprint shall be a result of the clearing or conversion of forest land. Commissioner Randle: From our experience, since 2011, farmers have always wanted to use their least productive land on their farm for solar development on their property. This rockier, sloped, or treed land is currently not farmed. If there are farmland soils, on the land intended to be used for dual-use ASTGU projects, will MDAR support the cutting of trees and use of less productive land not currently farmed?
3. The MA Attorney General recently rejected all or parts of several western MA town solar bylaws (Shutesbury, Pelham, Wendell). Has there been discussion or forums planned to help these and other towns understand the AG decisions?
4. Why on Earth would one of the presenters claim the climate emergency is not a health issue??
5. I also wanted to send my regards to all who participated in the production of this event. Will recommend to all Division members at DOER.