

October 13, 2021
Wareham, MA

To: Kenneth Buckland, Director of Planning and Community Development
Wareham Planning Board

RE: Project 21-21, "Fearing Hill Solar"

Dear Sirs,

I delivered remarks during the Public Hearing on the above-referenced matter and was requested to submit written comments. I spoke in opposition to this project and any waiver of protections now in place with respect to the subject land.

My remarks are with respect to the obligation of all arms of governmental bodies to uphold the letter and intent of the Constitution of the Commonwealth. No body can act against the public interest and the interests of environmental equity laid out in the original document which guarantees as stated below in Article 97.

What is environmental justice and why does it matter? Environmental justice is rooted in Article 97 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, which guarantees that:

The people shall have the right to clean air and water, freedom from excessive and unnecessary noise, and the natural, scenic, historic, and esthetic qualities of their environment; and the protection of the people in their right to the conservation, development and utilization of the agricultural, mineral, forest, water, air and other natural resources is hereby declared to be a public purpose.

[Objectives of Environmental Justice | Mass.gov](#)

Environmental justice (EJ) is based on the principle that *all people have a right to be protected from environmental pollution, and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment*. Environmental justice is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of environmental benefits.

Massachusetts Cities & Towns with Environmental Justice Populations
[EJ 2020 municipal statistics.xls \(mass.gov\)](#)

2020 Environmental Justice Populations

| Municipality | EJ criteria | Number of EJ block groups | Total number of block groups | Percent of block groups with EJ | Population in EJ block groups | Total population | Percent of population in EJ BGs |
|--------------|-------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|
| Revere | MIE | 37 | 42 | 88.1 | 50,113 | 53,692 | 93.3 |
| Rockland | I | 1 | 11 | 9.1 | 1,688 | 17,953 | 9.4 |
| Rockport | I | 1 | 6 | 16.7 | 987 | 7,231 | 13.6 |
| Rowe | I | 1 | 1 | 100.0 | 1,052 | 1,052 | 100.0 |
| Salem | MIE | 15 | 33 | 45.5 | 19,728 | 43,252 | 45.6 |
| Sandwich | I | 1 | 15 | 6.7 | 949 | 21,218 | 4.5 |
| Saugus | MI | 6 | 20 | 30.0 | 7,361 | 28,215 | 26.1 |
| Sharon | M | 1 | 11 | 9.1 | 2,238 | 18,526 | 12.1 |
| Shelburne | I | 1 | 2 | 50.0 | 786 | 1,649 | 47.7 |
| Shirley | M | 1 | 3 | 33.3 | 3,655 | 7,633 | 47.9 |
| Shrewsbury | MI | 11 | 20 | 55.0 | 22,928 | 37,416 | 61.3 |
| Somerville | MIE | 42 | 69 | 60.9 | 52,371 | 80,906 | 64.7 |
| South Hadley | MI | 3 | 13 | 23.1 | 4,356 | 17,703 | 24.6 |
| Southbridge | MI | 13 | 16 | 81.3 | 14,059 | 16,887 | 83.3 |
| Southwick | I | 1 | 5 | 20.0 | 1,577 | 9,720 | 16.2 |
| Spencer | I | 3 | 10 | 30.0 | 3,070 | 11,928 | 25.7 |
| Springfield | MIE | 115 | 121 | 95.0 | 147,722 | 154,139 | 95.8 |
| Stockbridge | I | 1 | 3 | 33.3 | 682 | 1,795 | 38.0 |
| Stoneham | M | 3 | 17 | 17.6 | 3,559 | 23,223 | 15.3 |
| Stoughton | MI | 12 | 19 | 63.2 | 18,910 | 28,639 | 66.0 |
| Sunderland | MI | 2 | 3 | 66.7 | 2,232 | 3,647 | 61.2 |
| Swampscott | M | 1 | 14 | 7.1 | 1,309 | 15,002 | 8.7 |
| Swansea | I | 1 | 9 | 11.1 | 1,901 | 16,567 | 11.5 |
| Taunton | MI | 18 | 31 | 58.1 | 34,314 | 57,124 | 60.1 |
| Tisbury | I | 2 | 5 | 40.0 | 1,761 | 4,107 | 42.9 |
| Tyngsborough | M | 1 | 7 | 14.3 | 881 | 12,364 | 7.1 |
| Wakefield | M | 2 | 21 | 9.5 | 1,065 | 26,993 | 3.9 |
| Walpole | M | 3 | 15 | 20.0 | 5,143 | 25,129 | 20.5 |
| Waltham | MIE | 30 | 48 | 62.5 | 43,213 | 62,777 | 68.8 |
| Ware | MI | 4 | 7 | 57.1 | 4,652 | 9,801 | 47.5 |
| Wareham | MI | 9 | 17 | 52.9 | 11,013 | 22,641 | 48.6 |
| Warren | I | 1 | 4 | 25.0 | 1,659 | 5,213 | 31.8 |
| Watertown | MI | 13 | 29 | 44.8 | 18,112 | 35,401 | 51.2 |
| Webster | MI | 5 | 11 | 45.5 | 8,876 | 16,973 | 52.3 |

What is an Environmental Justice Population?

In Massachusetts, a neighborhood is defined as an Environmental Justice population if one or more of the following four criteria are true:

- the annual median household income is not more than 65 per cent of the statewide annual median household income;
- minorities comprise 40 per cent or more of the population;
- 25 per cent or more of households lack English language proficiency;

or

- minorities comprise 25 per cent or more of the population and the annual median household income of the municipality in which the neighborhood is located does not exceed 150 per cent of the statewide annual median household income. Of Wareham's 17 block groups, nine are identified as containing EJ populations.

[Map Viewer](#)

I urge the Planning Board and all town boards and committees to familiarize themselves with the principles of environmental justice and their obligations to protect the public, particularly in these sensitive populations and environments.

Sincerely,

Lisa Morales
Onset