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**Sent:** Tuesday, April 02, 2019 9:31 PM  
**To:** Michael Behrendt  
**Subject:** Solar Ordinance

3/27/2019

To: Michael Behrendt and the Durham Planning Board

Thank you to the Planning Board and the Energy Committee who have worked so diligently on revising the Solar Ordinance to date.

Scenic Roads----designated and undesignated: Free standing solar systems

It is possible to have a balance between free standing solar systems and sustaining our scenic viewscape. The revised zoning deals with this but in one area does not go far enough----the situation is houses set close to the road with wide side yards—often times fields. Placing a free standing solar system in this side yard, possibly a field, may very well interrupt the viewscape and alter a person’s experience traveling that road.

Why does the large freestanding solar system change the experience of traveling down a scenic road? The experience is first based on the biology and workings of our eye and brain together. This takes me back to my Psychology 101 class: The eye sees an object, in this case a large object and the eye then stops looking around at other things in view. This is automatic. It is an eye-brain reaction. The person stops looking at the surrounding area and has to literally pull away from this view of the the large object to look at the surrounding area. This is a phenomena that happens when we look at things. An accomplished artist knows how to use this phenomena. The artist can use this phenomena to create art in such a way as to lead and determine the viewer’s experience. The viewer may be led through a painting in a certain order or in some area of the painting stop. An accomplished gardener knows how to design a garden to lead the viewer’s eyes and also to stop the viewer’s experience.

So assigning a number to how far away a freestanding solar system should be from the road is difficult.

Here is my recommendation--- Since there may not be a large # of free standing solar systems installed in Durham, add a site walk where the home owner, solar installer and members of the Planning Board or Town staff such as Michael Berharndt or Audrey Cline could see where the solar system would be placed. A discussion could take place on site that could alter the plan for the freestanding solar and preserve the viewscape. Maybe the free standing solar could be moved off center, or in front of a bank of trees or be placed behind a rise in the topography, whatever is on that property that can mitigate the mass of this freestanding solar could be

used. And as you can see this is a very individualized approach as every piece of property is different.

But I think with this approach there would be more assurance of getting the job done right----- a freestanding solar system producing energy and a protected viewscape.

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#### Enterprise Solar Energy Systems

These systems need to be Conditional Use not Permitted.

Here is my reasoning-----I am very concerned with viable farmland in Durham of which we have so much more than most NH towns. And protection of this farmland is of utmost importance.

There was a recent situation in Durham where a resident received a tailored brochure offering to purchase her open land and put a solar installation on it. The idea of an out of state company purchasing Durham farmland to install solar on it leaves me anxious----especially if this use is Permitted in our zoning. At the least it needs to be Conditional Use. Land used for commercial solar in our R and RC needs to be protected from unintended consequences----especially our farmland. It must be clear that the farmland cannot be destroyed, i.e., the sell off of topsoil, bulldozing the land, etc.) if solar systems are installed.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Carroll