

## **Memo**

**DATE:** December 6, 2019

**TO:** New Bedford Conservation Commission

**FROM:** Rich Rheaume

**RE:** **NBD SOLAR ARRAY - JOHN VERTENTE BLVD.**

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This memo has been prepared to present the projected impact of the proposed clearing of trees to the edge of the Bordering Vegetated Wetlands (BVW) and not stumping the 25 feet closest to the wetlands.

The existing conditions is a dense canopy of mature trees. As a result of historic logging of hardwood, there is a high percentage of evergreen trees. Due to the limited sunlight, the understory has some shrubs but a paucity of herbaceous growth. The proposed clearing to the edge of the BVW will allow sunlight to penetrate to the ground in the buffer zone and slightly into the BVW. The result will be the generation of robust herbaceous and shrub growth which will provide a superior buffer zone to the wetlands. This clearing approach has been done in dozens of solar array projects throughout Massachusetts and, in all cases, has generated thriving plant growth. The generation of a pollinator mix meadow under the solar panels, followed by a band of lush shrubs and herbaceous growth in the buffer zone, against an upper story stand of forest in the BVW has been heralded by Joseph Larson, Frank Golet and others as providing the ideal vegetative edge and interdispersion of plant forms that is beneficial for wildlife, plant health and preservation of the important characteristics and value of freshwater wetlands. The clearing, as proposed, will develop into a diverse vegetative system that is superior to existing conditions.