

Memo

DATE: December 10, 2019

TO: Sarah Porter

FROM: Rich Rheume

RE: **VALUE OF INTERSPERSION OF VEGETATION AT THE
JOHN VERTENTE BLVD. SOLAR ARRAY
IN THE LATE 1960s AND EARLY 1970s**

Joseph Larson, Frank Golet and others operating from the University of Rhode Island and University of Massachusetts, Amherst, wrote a series of publications on the characteristics and values of freshwater wetlands in the Northeast. Their methodologies were adopted by U.S. Fish and Wildlife and many state agencies. One major finding of their studies is that there is major benefit for specific vegetation forms to be in close juxtaposition to other vegetation forms and that the interspersion of vegetation types provides a major wildlife benefit, with the length or border being a key benefit for wildlife habitat.

At the proposed John Vertente Blvd. solar array, the property will be converted from a wooded site with little diversity to a pollinator meadow in juxtaposition to a herbaceous and shrub border juxtaposed to a swamp dominated by an upper story canopy. The band of robust shrubs between the pollinator meadow and the woods will be an ideal habitat. The proposed tree clearing to the edge of the wetlands allows more sunshine to penetrate into the swamp and will result in a more robust herbaceous and shrub growth along that edge. The result will be a diversity of cover types that will improve habitat value and provide an improved buffer to the wetlands.