



Testimony of Peter Sterling, Renewable Energy Vermont  
House Agriculture Committee  
February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Vermont has almost 1m acres of prime ag soils and 1,816 acres of **total** land developed for solar

Approximate Acreage of Ground Mounted DG Solar by County					
County	Acres in County	Acres of Solar	% of County in Solar	Primary Ag Soils (Acres)	Acres of Primary Ag Soils in Limits of Disturbance for Proposed CPGs 250kW-5MW 2023-2025
Addison	490,308	235	0.05%	137,905	0
Bennington	431,876	98	0.02%	58,584	0
Caledonia	415,204	112	0.03%	57,750	16
Chittenden	343,861	325	0.09%	84,546	62
Essex	424,025	12	0.00%	12,004	4
Franklin	403,632	105	0.03%	96,945	78
Grand Isle	52,332	38	0.07%	21,078	0
Lamoille	295,842	53	0.02%	81,468	0
Orange	439,802	104	0.02%	64,688	44
Orleans	444,489	24	0.01%	69,680	54
Rutland	595,022	339	0.06%	113,045	63
Washington	439,410	84	0.02%	57,566	29
Windham	502,697	117	0.02%	53,960	30
Windsor	620,661	171	0.03%	89,509	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,899,162</b>	<b>1,816</b>	<b>0.03%</b>	<b>998,728</b>	<b>417</b>
Calculated based on PP-12 data provided by PSD					
Acreage from VCGI "VT Data – 2020 Census County" and excludes water area					
* from 2023-2025, two >5MW projects were proposed which disturbed 212 acres of prime ag soils					



# American Farmland Trust Modeling Predicts 41,200 Acres of Agricultural Land Will Be Converted to Development in Vermont by 2040 Versus 1,200 Acres for Solar

**Table 3.** Acres of state agricultural land projected to be under solar installations or converted to development (UHD and LDR) by 2040.

State	Acres to Solar	Acres to UHD and LDR (BAU)	State	Acres to Solar	Acres to UHD and LDR (BAU)
Texas	345,200	2,192,700	Mississippi	20,600	513,300
California	311,200	797,400	Utah	20,000	210,100
Florida	188,000	620,200	Idaho	19,700	113,100
South Carolina	138,500	436,700	Nebraska	16,000	103,800
Michigan	93,900	483,800	West Virginia	15,000	157,600
Arizona	89,100	444,500	Pennsylvania	11,800	543,800
Illinois	82,400	363,400	New Jersey	11,500	125,000
Oklahoma	60,200	458,900	Missouri	10,800	568,200
Wisconsin	54,300	515,200	Massachusetts	10,400	73,800
North Carolina	51,100	1,197,300	New Mexico	9,000	205,000
Louisiana	48,000	306,000	Alabama	6,700	545,000
Virginia	45,900	594,100	Connecticut	6,600	55,000
New York	45,100	452,000	Oregon	6,300	109,100
Kentucky	42,700	456,500	Arkansas	6,000	480,400
Georgia	41,900	798,400	Washington	5,800	192,300
Nevada	41,500	155,700	Delaware	5,400	65,100
Kansas	36,600	196,900	North Dakota	4,900	198,500
Ohio	32,600	518,500	New Hampshire	2,400	35,600
Minnesota	29,700	369,500	Maine	1,500	53,400
Maryland	28,200	178,200	Montana	1,500	171,700
Colorado	27,400	417,500	Vermont	1,200	41,200
Indiana	23,300	451,100	Wyoming	1,000	86,600
Tennessee	23,300	1,014,600	Rhode Island	1,000	8,100
Iowa	22,600	183,400	South Dakota	800	156,900

- Lease rates for solar are typically in the \$1200/acre per year range providing 20+ years of income insulated from weather, fuel costs, tariffs, and market forces impacting ag products



# Site Remediation and Solar Panel Recycling

Solar projects comply with AAFM's Act 250 procedure: Reclamation of Vermont Agricultural Soils:

- ✓ Any ag soils that are disturbed are securely stored on site
- ✓ Ag soils are rarely allowed to be graded during construction except for road building or stormwater runoff prevention
- ✓ Weight restrictions on vehicles that can be driven over ag soils to prevent soil compaction
- ✓ During decommissioning the developer conducts a bulk density test to detect if there is soil compaction that must be remediated

**COMMERCIAL SOLAR PANEL RECYCLING**

## How we recycle your solar panels

**ALUMINUM**  
RAW MATERIAL SHIPPED DIRECTLY TO METALS SMELTER FOR REUSE/RECASTING

**CABLES & J BOXES**  
METALS & PLASTICS SEPARATED BY DOWNSTREAM RECYCLER

**GLASS**

- Finely Ground
- Cullet
- Backing Sheet Separation
- SANDBLASTING MEDIUM
- COLORED STREET MARKING
- DURABLE PAVERS (IN PROTOTYPE)

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# When Vermont Deploys Solar, We Help Displace Natural Gas Burning Plants



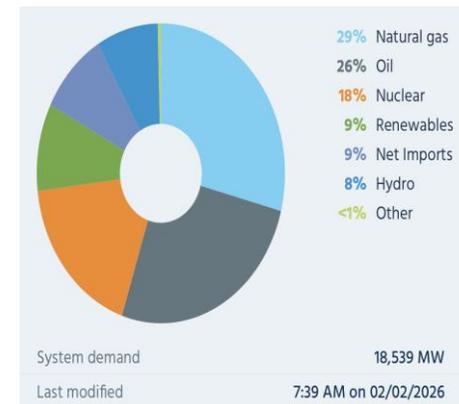
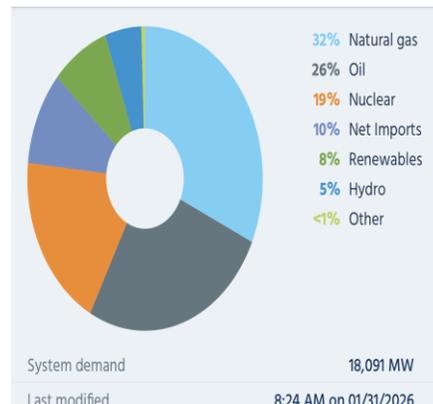
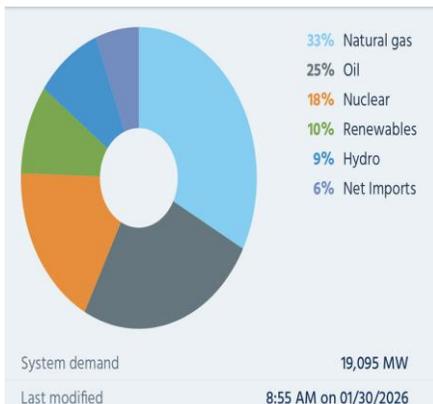
Mystic Natural Gas Generating Station



New England relies on 64 baseload natural gas plants none located in Vermont but in low income and minority communities in other New England States.

These gas plants are typically 60 acres- Downtown Montpelier from National Life to the Statehouse to the Library to Shaws and back to National Life

ISO NE electric mix during current cold snap can be >50% oil and gas



# Net Metering Helps Preserve Vermont's Open Spaces

Net Metering in Vermont is limited to on site production only- either on a rooftop or in backyards or otherwise very close to an existing structure

In 2025, there were 5 CPG applications for net metered roof-mounted systems 150kW-500kW

You could offset a 5 MW solar array with approximately 5 additional 400 kW commercial projects and 150 additional 20 kW residential projects.

Please support H.716 introduced by Rep. Chris Morrow to help make net metering more affordable for more people

