



Testimony of Peter Sterling, Renewable Energy Vermont
Senate Agriculture Committee
January 20th, 2026

According to the USDA's NRCS Soil Survey, Vermont Has Almost 1 Million Acres of Prime Agricultural Soils

County	Total Acres	Acres of Primary Agricultural Soils	Percent Primary Agricultural Soils
Addison	516,939	137,905	27%
Bennington	433,119	58,584	14%
Caledonia	420,101	57,750	14%
Chittenden	396,198	84,546	21%
Essex	429,359	12,004	3%
Franklin	440,776	96,945	22%
Grand Isle	126,978	21,078	17%
Lamoille	296,400	81,468	27%
Orange	442,545	64,688	15%
Orleans	462,291	69,680	15%
Rutland	604,394	113,045	19%
Washington	445,194	57,566	13%
Windham	510,962	53,960	11%
Windsor	625,310	89,509	14%
Statewide	6,150,565	998,728	16%

CPG Applications from 2023 to 2025 for Solar Projects Qualified to Meet Vermont's In-State Renewable Energy Requirements :

- 47 acres of prime agricultural soils where within the area of disturbance for solar arrays 150kW-500kW
- 371 acres of prime agricultural soils where within the area of disturbance for solar arrays 500kW-5MW

Land located within the “Area of Disturbance” can still be used for agricultural purposes

As context, according to the 2022 USDA Agriculture Census from 2017-22, Vermont lost 19,547 acres of “land in farms”- an average of 3,909 acres per year.



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

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



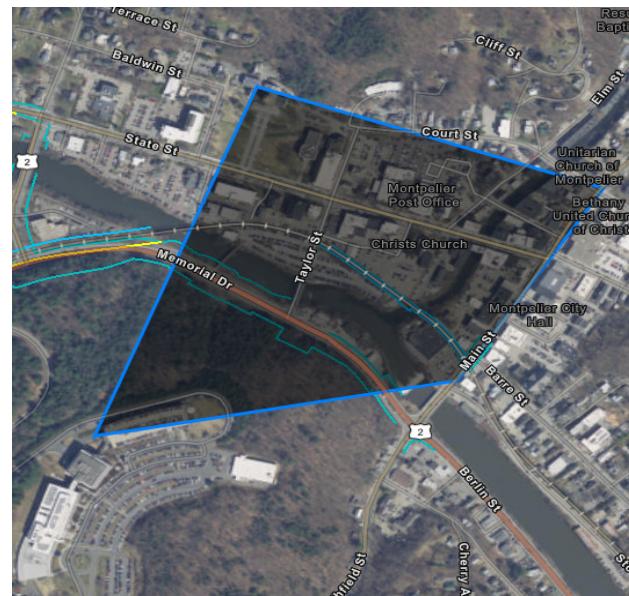
Mystic Natural Gas Generating Station



Everett LNG Import Facility

New England relies on 64 baseload natural gas plants none of which are not located in Vermont but in low income and minority communities in all other New England States.

These plants are typically 60 acres in size covers Montpelier from National Life to the Statehouse to the Library to Shaws and back to National Life



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 S.170 introduced by Senator Anne Watson to help make net metering more affordable for more people

