



**TOWN OF HATFIELD**  
**MASSACHUSETTS**  
*MEMORIAL TOWN HALL*  
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**Hatfield Agricultural Advisory Commission**

*Members:*

Robert Wagner, Chair  
John Pease  
Thomas Petcen  
Russell Powell  
Betsy Speeter

Hatfield Planning Board  
Hatfield Zoning Board of Appeals  
Town Hall  
59 Main Street  
Hatfield, MA 01030

January 9, 2013

RE: Solar Arrays on Farms and Farmland

To Whom It May Concern,

At its January 8, 2013 meeting, the Hatfield Agricultural Advisory Commission considered and adopted the following guidance on the subject of the installation of solar arrays for power production on farms and farmland.

The Commission recognizes the potential value of solar installations on farms to supply on-farm energy needs and to produce a supplemental revenue stream for farming operations. As the installations of solar arrays, particularly land-based systems, can have a long-term impact on the agricultural resources in town, the Commission provides the following guidelines and recommendations to reduce such impacts:

- To the extent possible, solar arrays on farms should be placed on existing buildings on the farm.
- If a land-based array is to be considered, utilize non-agricultural soil areas, or reclaimed or previously disturbed, non-cropland sites.

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- Every effort should be made to avoid field areas with prime farmland soils and/or farmland soils of statewide importance as designated by the US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (the Commission can provide information on identifying and locating these soil areas in town).
- If a solar array is to be installed on land with prime farmland soils and/or farmland soils of statewide importance, the Commission recommends the following conditions for the project:
  1. Keep site preparation and disturbance of the existing soil conditions of the land to a minimum.
  2. No topsoil removal.
  3. The use and construction of access and maintenance roads should be kept to a minimum and in all cases pervious surface materials should be used.
  4. All support structures associated with the solar array, including support poles for the panels should be installed without the use of concrete or any permanent footings.
  5. A clear plan with contingencies should be in place at the time of installation for de-commissioning the solar project, removing the array and related infrastructure, and returning the site to as closely to its original condition as possible.

The Commission believes that the above guidelines and recommendations will enable farmers and farmland owners in town to benefit from and contribute to the production of renewable energy from solar while keeping to a minimum the long-term impacts to and loss of our valuable and irreplaceable agricultural soil resources.

Thank you.

John Pease  
Thomas Petcen  
Russell Powell  
Betsy Speeter  
Robert Wagner

CC:  
Board of Selectmen  
Energy Committee  
Conservation Commission  
Open Space Committee