

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY RESOURCES**

**SMALL CLEAN ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITY SITING &
PERMITTING (225 CMR 29.00)**

Guideline on Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures

Effective Date: August 14, 2026

Background and Purpose

In accordance with 225 CMR 29.00, the Department of Energy Resources ("Department") issues this Guideline on the application of [*Site Suitability Assessments for Clean Energy Infrastructure*](#) ("[*Site Suitability Guidance*](#)") and on measures to mitigate and minimize impacts identified through the application of that Guidance. This Guideline interprets and is best read alongside the Site Suitability Guidance. To the extent anything contained in this Guideline is inconsistent with the Site Suitability Guidance, the Site Suitability Guidance shall control.

This Guideline applies to Consolidated Local Permit Applications that are subject to the requirements of 225 CMR 29.07. An Applicant may be required to comply with additional Mitigation or offset provisions pursuant to federal, state, and local law (for example, the wetlands replication requirements of 310 CMR 10.55(4)). The Minimization and Mitigation measures assigned pursuant to 225 CMR 29.07 based on an Applicant's Site Suitability Score are additional to any other such requirements. However, Minimization or Mitigation measures required of the Applicant by other laws and regulations may count towards the Mitigation measures assigned by the Local Government Representative pursuant to 225 CMR 29.07, provided that such measures have a rational nexus to the impacts identified in the Applicant's Site Suitability Report.

Local Government Representatives should clearly account for measures required by permitting regulations, measures assigned pursuant to 225 CMR 29.07 based on an Applicant's Site Suitability Score, and any overlap between them. Doing so will ensure (i) consistency with applicable laws and regulations, (ii) proper assignment of Minimization and Mitigation measures pursuant to 225 CMR 29.07, and (iii) appropriate enforcement and compliance responsibilities.

1. Exemptions

Applicants proposing Small Clean Energy Infrastructure Facilities (“SCEIFs”) that qualify for an exemption under 225 CMR 29.07(1) are excused from the requirement to apply this Guideline and the Site Suitability Guidance. Applicants proposing facilities that meet the requirements of 225 CMR 29.07(1) are not precluded from applying this Guideline or the Site Suitability Guidance to their projects, but Local Governments are precluded from assigning Mitigation or Minimization to such Applicants under 225 CMR 29.07.

2. Criteria-specific Suitability Scores

Criteria-specific Suitability Scores are calculated using the methodology described in the Site Suitability Guidance Section IV and are assessed for each of the following criteria:

- Climate change resilience;
- Carbon storage and sequestration;
- Biodiversity;
- Agricultural resources; and
- Social and environmental burdens.

The [Site Suitability Mapping Tool](#) is used to calculate Criteria-specific Suitability Scores for carbon storage and sequestration, biodiversity, agricultural resources, and social and environmental burdens. The [ResilientMass Climate Resilience Design Standards Tool](#) is used to calculate the Criteria-specific Suitability Score for climate change resilience. Certain Criteria-specific Suitability Scores can be modified by two specific assessments: (1) an assessment of an SCEIF’s development potential and (2) an assessment of its social and environmental benefits. Please see Section IV.C of the Site Suitability Guidance for further details on Criteria-specific Suitability Scores, including access to the Site Suitability Mapping Tool and the ResilientMass Climate Resilience Design Standards Tool.

Use [Table 1](#) to interpret Criteria-specific Suitability Scores and determine the scope of Minimization and Mitigation required for approval of a Consolidated Local Permit Application:

Table 1: Criteria-specific Suitability Scores:

Criteria Score Range	Suitability (for specific criteria)	Interpretation (for specific criteria)
Less than or equal to 1.0	Highly suitable, minimal impact	No Minimization or Mitigation measures required
Greater than 1.0 and less than or equal to 2.5	Moderately suitable, low impact	Limited Minimization and/or Mitigation measures may be required.
Greater than 2.5 and less than or equal to 4.0	Not very suitable, moderate impacts	Moderate Minimization and/or Mitigation measures may be required.
Greater than 4.0	Unsuitable, high impact	Significant Minimization and/or Mitigation measures may be required.

When Minimization does not adequately offset the potential impacts identified in the Applicant's Site Suitability Report, the ratios in [Table 2](#) should be used to determine the scope of Mitigation required for agricultural resources, biodiversity, and carbon storage and sequestration Criteria-specific Suitability Scores:

Table 2: Mitigation Ratios for Agricultural Resources, Biodiversity, and Carbon Storage and Sequestration Criteria

Criteria Score Range	Ratios (mitigation to impact for specific criteria)
Less than or equal to 1.0	No minimization or mitigation measures required
Greater than 1.0 and less than or equal to 2.0	1:10 - 1 acre of mitigation for every 10 acres of impact
Greater than 2.0 and less than or equal to 2.5	1:5 - 1 acre of mitigation for every 5 acres of impact
Greater than 2.5 and less than or equal to 3.5	1:3 - 1 acre of mitigation for every 3 acres of impact
Greater than 3.5 and less than or equal to 4.0	1:2 - 1 acre of mitigation for every 2 acres of impact
Greater than 4.0	1:1 - 1 acre of mitigation for every 1 acre of impact

The Applicant's Site Suitability Report will contain acreage data on the proposed SCEIF's impacts to agricultural resources, biodiversity, and carbon storage and sequestration. Applicants and Local Governments should use this acreage data when calculating the needed Mitigation based on the ratios above.

2.1 Example Calculation of Mitigation Ratios

Mitigation requirements for a project with a Site Footprint of 8 acres and the following Criteria-specific Suitability Scores are calculated as follows:

- **Agricultural resources score: 0.7**

- No mitigation required for scores ≤ 1.0

- **Biodiversity score: 2.7**

- 1:3 Mitigation to impact ratio for scores > 2.5 and ≤ 3.5

*8 acres of impact * 0.33 = 2.6 acres of Biodiversity-related Mitigation*

- **Carbon storage and sequestration score: 3.7**

- 1:2 Mitigation to impact ratio for scores > 3.5 and ≤ 4.0

*8 acres of impact * 0.5 = 4 acres of Carbon Storage and Sequestration Mitigation*

- **Total Mitigation Needs for these Criteria:**

- 2.6 acres for Biodiversity + 4 acres for Carbon Storage and Sequestration

2.2 The Mitigation Hierarchy

The mitigation hierarchy prioritizes Avoidance, then Minimization, and, where necessary, Mitigation of the anticipated impacts a proposed SCEIF will have on agricultural resources, biodiversity, carbon storage and sequestration, climate resilience, and social and environmental burdens. When properly applied, the mitigation hierarchy supports the appropriate siting of SCEIFs, while reducing project impacts on people and the environment, and supporting the Commonwealth's goals for the conservation of natural and working lands.

Pursuant to 225 CMR 29.07(3), Applicants should apply the mitigation hierarchy when developing proposed Mitigation and Minimization measures as part of their Consolidated Local Permit Application. Local Government Representatives should refer to the mitigation hierarchy when reviewing the Applicant's proposed Mitigation

and Minimization measures, and may assign additional or alternative measures, in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy and this Guideline to address deficiencies.

2.2.1 Applying the Mitigation Hierarchy

For the purposes of 225 CMR 29.00, the mitigation hierarchy is applied through the following steps:

1. Avoidance:
 - a. An Applicant demonstrates Avoidance through measures taken during site selection that prevent negative impacts on climate change resiliency, carbon sequestration and storage, biodiversity, agricultural resources, social and environmental burdens, and recreation.
 - b. Pursuant to 225 CMR 29.07, when an Applicant's Site Suitability Report reflects highly suitable Criteria-specific Suitability Score(s) of less than or equal to 1.0 pursuant to the Site Suitability Guidance, Avoidance of impact to that criteria or criterion is met.
 - c. When an Applicant's Site Suitability Report reflects Criteria-specific Suitability Score(s) greater than 1.0, Minimization is required to offset potential impacts to that criteria or criterion.
2. Minimization:
 - a. An Applicant demonstrates Minimization through measures taken to reduce the duration, intensity, and extent of impacts, including direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts, that cannot be completely avoided, to the extent practicable.
 - b. When Minimization does not adequately offset the potential impacts identified in the Applicant's Site Suitability Report, Mitigation is required to offset those potential impacts.
3. Mitigation:
 - a. An Applicant demonstrates Mitigation through measures taken which include, but are not limited to, the repair, rehabilitation, or restoration of an area affected by an adverse impact of siting.
 - b. Mitigation measures may also be implemented in areas outside of the Site Footprint, with the permission of the Local Government, or when it is not possible to implement Mitigation measures on-site.

In applying the mitigation hierarchy, Local Government Representatives should consider that certain avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures may be

required though other permitting standards. Examples of Minimization and Mitigation measures are included Section 3.0 of this Guideline.

2.3 Site Suitability Score Modifiers

Site Suitability Score Modifiers are positive or negative adjustments to certain Criteria-specific Suitability Scores. Procedurally and pursuant to 225 CMR 29.07(2), Site Suitability Score Modifiers are applied to the scores before the Local Government Representative reviews and assigns required Minimization and Mitigation measures. Pursuant to the Site Suitability Guidance, two Site Suitability Score Modifiers are available; one based on a SCEIF's development potential, and a second in response to any social and environmental benefits the Applicant agrees to provide. These modifiers are designed to incentivize best practices in land use and collaboration between developers and Local Governments.

2.2.1 Development Potential Modifiers

Development potential modifiers are based on whether the site meets the requirements of certain types of highly suitable or highly unsuitable categories of land pursuant to the Site Suitability Guidance. In general, Brownfields, Eligible Landfills, and Previously Developed Lands are considered highly suitable sites, whereas Protected Open Space is considered highly unsuitable.

SCEIFs sited on a Brownfield, Eligible Landfill, or Previously Developed Lands shall receive a Criteria-specific Suitability Score of zero (0) for all criteria except for Climate Resiliency.

Conversely, SCEIFs with a Site Footprint that overlaps with Protected Open Space (as defined in Section III of the Site Suitability Guidance) automatically receive a 5 for each Criteria-specific Suitability Score, except in the case of certain Solar Canopies. The Criteria-specific Suitability Score for Solar Canopies sited over parking lots with a permitted and functioning stormwater management system located in Protected Open Space with a nameplate capacity greater than 2 megawatts shall be calculated as if they were not located on Protected Open Space.

To apply the Development Potential Site Suitability Score Modifier, Applicants should consult with the Department pursuant to the process described in Section VI.D.i of the Site Suitability Guidance.

2.2.2 Social and Environmental Benefits Modifiers

The social and environmental benefits Site Suitability Score Modifier is calculated to reflect any social and environmental benefits provided by the proposed SCEIF. Pursuant to 225 CMR 29.07(2), an Applicant who wishes to apply this Site Suitability Score Modifier may do so only after entering into a written agreement with the Local Government that binds the Applicant to delivering agreed-upon benefits. Pursuant to the Site Suitability Guidance, that agreement should be considered a form of a Community Benefits Agreement as described in the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Office of Environmental Justice and Equity's [*Standards and Guidelines for Community Benefit Plans and Community Benefit Agreements*](#).

Proposed SCEIFs can have one-half (0.5) of a point subtracted from their Social and Environmental Burdens Criteria-specific Suitability Score, up to a maximum of three (3) points subtracted, for demonstrating a social or environmental benefit within one or more of the categories recognized below:

1. **Environmental Justice and Equity:** Addressing historical harms, reducing environmental burdens, and ensuring that the most burdened communities receive priority access to energy and environmental benefits, clean energy, and public health protections.
2. **Economic Development and Workforce Creation:** Creating good-paying, accessible jobs for local residents, supporting small and minority-owned businesses, and building long-term economic opportunities.
3. **Infrastructure and Community Support:** Investing in the physical and social infrastructure that communities need to thrive – such as affordable housing, transportation access, broadband, or childcare facilities.
4. **Implementation of Environmental and Public Health Protections:** Protecting people's health and the natural environment through preservation efforts, pollution prevention and controls, land and habitat restoration, and climate resilience measures.

Applicants interested in pursuing the Social and Environmental Benefits Site Suitability Modifier should review the details in Section IV.D of the Site Suitability Guidance.

[Table 3](#) below includes examples of the types of agreements or documentation that could satisfy the different categories of social and environmental benefits listed above:

Table 3: Example Social and Environmental Benefits

Example Benefit	Example Documentation or Agreement
Improvement to Local Habitat	Signed agreement, confirmed by municipal conservation or planning commission, or equivalent body
Improvement to Outdoor Air Quality	Documentation of displaced emitting source provided by relevant utility or site owner
Creation of Expanded Recreational Opportunities	Signed agreement with municipal city council, selectboard, economic development board, or planning commission, such as a trail easement
Deployment of Public Electric Vehicle Charging	Signed contract for construction of site or provision of funds
Application of Community Solar Bill Credits to Reduce Electric Bills	Signed bill credit allocation commitment and/or credit allocation forms
Establishment of Cultural Easements	Deed of easement or relevant restrictive covenant
Creation or Maintenance of Local Jobs	Signed Collective Bargaining Agreement or guaranteed employment contracts for specific term
Utilizes Pollinator-Friendly Habitat	Securing a silver certification or higher from the University of Massachusetts Clean Energy Extension Pollinator Friendly Certification Program and a signed agreement with municipal conservation commission or equivalent body

3. Minimization and Mitigation Measures for Criteria-Specific Suitability Scores

Mitigation must have a rational nexus to the specific criterion on which the score was assessed. Local Governments and Applicants should refer to Table 1 and Table 2 in this Guideline to determine the appropriate scope of Mitigation.

Proposed SCEIFs that are considered highly suitable and have minimal impact according to the Criteria-specific Suitability Score may still be required to fulfill Mitigation obligations to comply with local, state, and federal laws and regulations (e.g., wetlands replacement, stormwater and erosion control measures). Minimization and Mitigation for Criteria-specific Suitability Scores are additional to any other offsets required by other local, state, and federal laws and regulations but such obligations may count towards fulfilling the Minimization and Mitigation requirements required by 225 CMR 29.00.

The following subsections provide technical guidance to assist Local Governments and Applicants with identifying and developing appropriate Minimization and Mitigation measures based on each Criteria-specific Suitability Score. This Guideline does not prescribe specific practices but defines the outcomes for Minimization and

Mitigation that selected measures should achieve. Measures should be applied in alignment with the mitigation hierarchy and designed and constructed by technical experts in the domain of the relevant criterion.

While developing and assessing Minimization and Mitigation proposals, Local Governments, Applicants, and technical experts should also consider whether the measures may have positive or negative cross-cutting effects on multiple criteria. For example, measures to restore habitat can also enhance climate resilience through improved stormwater infiltration and can alleviate social and environmental burdens by providing low-impact recreational access. Conversely, measures to mitigate impacts on carbon storage and sequestration may reduce available habitat for certain species by altering the structure and composition of a site's vegetation. Parties using this Guideline should make a holistic assessment of the positive and negative cross-cutting effects of Minimization and Mitigation measures to achieve desired management outcomes and to avoid unintended impacts on related criteria.

Certain Minimization and Mitigation measures may require additional permitting and approval under the Wetlands Protection Act or other laws and regulations. Permitting and approvals for such measures are not subject to the requirements of 225 CMR 29.00.

3.1 Climate Change Resilience

Measures for climate change resilience will be selected based on the Site Footprint's exposure to: (1) riverine flooding, and (2) coastal flooding from sea level rise and storm surge.

- Minimization measures for climate change resilience are practices that reduce a project's vulnerability and exposure to damage from riverine or coastal flooding, under present and future levels of sea-level rise, storm surge, and extreme precipitation. These measures include, but are not limited to, nature-based flood and stormwater control systems, project design enhancements, practices to support soil infiltration and porosity, and physical structures to manage floodwater. Local Governments may request that Applicants consult with technical experts in flood resilience, engineering, and climate adaptation to identify and implement Minimization measures that reduce vulnerability and exposure to flooding.
- Mitigation measures for climate change resilience are practices that conserve, restore, or improve the adaptive capacity and resilience of coastal and riverine ecosystems, under present and future levels of stormwater runoff pollution, sea-level rise, storm surge, and extreme precipitation. Local Governments may

request that Applicants consult with technical experts in coastal and riverine ecosystem restoration and resilience to identify and implement Mitigation measures.

3.1.1 Examples of Minimization and Mitigation Measures for Climate Change Resilience

This Section provides a non-exhaustive selection of Minimization and Mitigation measures for climate change resilience. The suitability and effectiveness of any practice is dependent on project- and site-specific conditions. Not all practices will be suitable to address the impacts of a given project.

Sample Minimization Measures for Climate Change Resilience:

- Implement green infrastructure and nature-based resilience practices such as utilizing rain gardens/bioretention, permeable pavements, bioswales, tree plantings.
- Establish buffer strips (planted or naturally occurring vegetation, such as trees, shrubs, legumes, or grasses) to stabilize streambanks and shorelines, and prevent bank erosion and slumping.
- Establish filter strips (vegetated areas along water bodies, designed to slow the movement of overland flow of water so that sediment will be trapped, provide an opportunity for vegetation to remove nutrients from subsurface flow, provide shade to the adjacent water body to maintain cool water temperature, and protect bank stability and prevent erosion) as defined in *Massachusetts Forestry Best Management Practices Manual*.
- Install, establish, and maintain appropriate deep-rooting native vegetated ground cover between and under the SCEIF to facilitate infiltration.
- Utilize Low-Impact Development¹ construction and maintenance techniques such as minimal grading, maintaining existing vegetative cover, no removal of topsoil, and post-construction decompaction to avoid and minimize soil compaction to achieve low bulk density and adequate soil depth for infiltration.
- Require foundation specifications that meet wet soil conditions to address structural integrity and corrosion issues.

¹ See. Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Water Resources Commission [Low Impact Development](#)

Sample Mitigation Measures for Climate Change Resilience:

- Execute land conservation agreements, such as easements or land purchases, for coastal and riverine ecosystems and floodplain areas.
- Preservation in perpetuity of on-site wetlands and other natural areas contributing to climate resilience.
- Implement a coastal or riverine habitat restoration project or a dam removal project.
- Conduct a Tidal Restoration Project, which is a project that will restore tidal flow and that does not meet all the eligibility criteria set forth in 310 CMR 10.13, and may be permitted as an Ecological Restoration Limited Project.
- Conduct a Shellfish Habitat Restoration Project, which is a project to emplace cultch or other substrate for the purpose of restoring shellfish habitat, and may be permitted as an Ecological Restoration Limited Project provided that in addition to the criteria set forth in 310 CMR 10.24.

3.2 Carbon Storage and Sequestration

Measures for the carbon storage and sequestration criterion will be based on the estimated level of current ecosystem carbon stocks and the estimated loss of future carbon sequestration associated with the clearing and disturbance of the Site Footprint. Ecosystem carbon stocks refer to the amount of carbon stored in live vegetation, coarse woody debris, and soils. Carbon sequestration is the process of absorbing and storing carbon dioxide by vegetation from the atmosphere.

- Minimization measures for carbon sequestration and storage are practices that reduce future carbon sequestration loss and emissions from the Site Footprint's ecosystem carbon stocks.
- Mitigation measures for carbon sequestration and storage are practices that offset foregone future carbon sequestration and carbon emissions from the Site Footprint's ecosystem carbon stocks. Measures include but are not limited to conservation of forests and habitats threatened by conversion, habitat restoration of carbon-rich natural areas, and improved forest management practices that improve carbon storage and sequestration cycling processes.
- Local Governments may request that Applicants consult with or contract with a certified forester or carbon project technician to identify and implement Minimization and Mitigation measures for carbon storage and sequestration.

3.2.1 Examples of Minimization and Mitigation Measures for Carbon Storage and Sequestration

This Section provides a non-exhaustive selection of Minimization and Mitigation measures for carbon storage and sequestration. The appropriateness and effectiveness of any practice is dependent on project and site-specific conditions. Not all practices will be suitable to address the impacts of a given project.

Sample Minimization Measures for Carbon Storage and Sequestration:

- Protect soil organic matter by minimizing disturbance of topsoil, site grading activities, and concrete foundations and by applying mulches and erosion control mats and socks.
- Confine construction vehicles and heavy machinery to designated access roads and areas with intense use.
- Minimize soil disturbance by utilizing driven or helical piles in place of concrete footers.
- If applicable, incorporate system-based conservation agriculture or agroforestry practices within the Site Footprint.
- Use electric-powered mowers or contract with a solar grazing business to use livestock to control vegetation in place of fossil fuel-powered mowing equipment.
- Create and implement a long-term management plan to ensure the continued growth and health of wooded areas within the Site Footprint, or, with permission from the owner, on adjacent parcels of land.
- Convert forest slash to biochar and any harvested timber to long-lived wood products.
- Revegetate disturbed soils with deep-rooting native species.
- Reduce loss of soil carbon stocks by putting slash or mulch on skid trails, halting sitework in the rain or while the soil is saturated, clearing trees while ground is frozen, and using forwarders instead of whole-tree skidding.

Sample Mitigation Measures for Carbon Storage and Sequestration:

- Execute land conservation agreements for carbon-rich natural areas.
- On-site preservation in perpetuity of carbon-rich natural areas.
- Implement a restoration project that enhances carbon storage and sequestration, and the resilience of carbon pools to disturbance events, such as pest outbreaks or extreme weather.

- Implement reforestation or afforestation practices with native tree species within the Site Footprint, in conjunction with measures to prevent and eradicate any invasive species that may inhibit native tree cover.

3.3 Biodiversity

Measures minimize or mitigate negative impacts on land and waters with high habitat and biodiversity conservation value.

- Minimization measures for biodiversity avoid or reduce project impacts affecting the function, resilience, and connectivity of on-site and surrounding ecosystems and their species. Measures should also address impacts to landscape-scale ecological processes and habitat availability for species of conservation concern. These measures include but are not limited to seasonal timing of construction and clearing activities to protect migratory or nesting species, establishment of buffer zones around sensitive habitats, creation of wildlife corridors to support connectivity, and implementation of an invasive species control plan, and use of pollinator-friendly native seed mixes to revegetate disturbed land.
- Mitigation measures for biodiversity are practices that conserve or restore the functions, resilience, and connectivity of on-site, surrounding, or off-site ecosystems. Measures should protect the ecosystem functions and habitats impacted by project development in a like-for-like manner. These measures include but are not limited to creation of a conservation easement, on-site habitat conservation measures, habitat restoration, and support for on-going habitat restoration projects or conservation research.
- Local Governments may request that Applicants consult or contract with conservation professionals or organizations to identify and implement Minimization and Mitigation measures for biodiversity.

3.3.1 Examples of Minimization and Mitigation Measures for Biodiversity

This Section provides a non-exhaustive selection of Minimization and Mitigation measures for biodiversity. The suitability and effectiveness of any practice is dependent on project- and site-specific conditions. Not all practices will be suitable to address the impacts of a given project.

Sample Minimization Measures for Biodiversity

- Preserve wildlife corridors throughout the Site Footprint to support connectivity with surrounding landscape.
- Utilize rodent-proof wiring and avoid all use of rodenticides.

- Design fences to reduce impacts to habitat connectivity and access for animals and to reduce the risk for vehicle collisions with large animals and reduce traffic mortality for small animals.
- Use construction best practices, permanent native ground cover, and operation practices that protect and enhance soil health and create habitat and water quality co-benefits.
- Minimize impacts to soil biodiversity by limiting topsoil disturbance, grading activities, and concrete foundations and footers.
- Contract with a solar grazing business to use livestock to control vegetation in place of mechanical mowers.
- Seed disturbed areas with native grasses and straw bales.
- Use invasive-free sand, gravel, mulch and silt barriers.
- Dispose of invasive debris in a manner that avoids further spread, such as burning.

Sample Mitigation Measures for Biodiversity

- Execute land conservation agreements on undeveloped land purchased by the Applicant.
- On-site preservation in perpetuity of existing habitat
- On-site or off-site habitat restoration to protect and replace ecosystem processes and functions impaired by project impacts.
- Implement preventative measures to control the growth of invasive vegetative species to less than 10% of the Site Footprint. Conduct regular follow-up checks for three to five years after implementation, to ensure species are eradicated and will not reestablish from seeds left behind or from undetected rhizomes and roots..

3.4 Agricultural Resources

Measures to protect farmland soil can apply when the Site Footprint overlaps with: (1) Prime Farmland; (2) Farmland of Statewide Importance; and (3) Farmland of Unique Importance, as referenced in the Site Suitability Guidance.

- Minimization measures for agricultural resources are practices that preserve or enhance soil health and agricultural production, particularly when those areas are active farmland. These measures include but are not limited to incorporating agrivoltaics into the site design, planting native vegetation groundcover, implementing stormwater, sedimentation and erosion control measures, establishing buffers, and reducing soil damage and compaction through appropriate methods during construction and operations and maintenance phases.

- Mitigation measures for agricultural resources are practices that preserve and enhance agricultural resources or workforce for an agricultural economy. These measures include but are not limited to restoring and monitoring degraded lands and establishing agricultural conservation easements.
- Local Governments may request that Applicants consult or contract with a soil health expert or extension service provider to ensure the Minimization and Mitigation measures are implemented properly and in accordance with scientific standards.

3.4.1 Examples of Minimization and Mitigation Measures for Agricultural Resources

This Section provides a non-exhaustive selection of Minimization and Mitigation measures for agricultural resource impacts. The appropriateness and effectiveness of any practice is dependent on project- and site-specific conditions. Not all practices will be suitable to address the impacts of a given project.

Sample Minimization Measures for Agricultural Resources

- Plant cover crops or native vegetative groundcover after construction activities to stabilize soil, prevent erosion, and increase water retention.
- Reduce soil damage and soil compaction through mulching, retention of organic matter, designating equipment pathways and buffer zones, operating equipment when soil is frozen or otherwise less susceptible to rutting, and using less impactful equipment during construction and maintenance.
- Minimize impacts to soil health by limiting topsoil disturbance, grading activities, and concrete foundations and footers.
- Contract with a solar grazing business to use livestock to control vegetation and enhance soil nutrients.
- Incorporate agrivoltaics into the Site Footprint design.
- Enter into agreement to maintain agricultural uses for a minimum of 10 years.

Sample Mitigation Measures for Agricultural Resources

- Restore and monitor degraded lands.
- Implement an integrated soil health management plan to support recovery of soil ecosystem processes during the life of the project and after decommissioning.

- Establish an on-site or off-site agricultural conservation easement or other conservation easement.

3.5 Social and Environmental Burdens

Measures avoid, minimize, or mitigate negative impacts based on exposure to pollution, and additional public health and income criteria as measured by the [MassEnviroScreen](#) for the most environmentally vulnerable or burdened communities in Massachusetts.

- Minimization measures for social and environmental burdens are practices that reduce the harms to people and the environment resulting from project development. Minimization measures should address the variety of ways that SCEIF siting can impair social wellbeing and environmental quality. These measures include but are not limited to reducing noise levels during project operations, preservation and creation of on-site or adjoining greenspace and shade zones to reduce heat island effects, and timing construction and maintenance activities to limit impacts to traffic and neighbors.
- Mitigation measures for social and environmental burdens are practices and initiatives that address historical harms, reduce environmental burdens, and ensure that the most burdened communities receive priority access to energy and environmental benefits, clean energy, economic development, and public health protections. These measures include but are not limited to protecting human health and the natural environment through preservation efforts, pollution prevention and controls, land and habitat restoration, and climate resilience measures. They may also include creating good-paying, accessible jobs for local residents, supporting small and minority-owned businesses, and building long-term economic opportunities.

3.5.1 Examples of Minimization and Mitigation Measures for Social and Environmental Burdens

This Section provides a non-exhaustive selection of Minimization and Mitigation measures for social and environmental burden impacts. The appropriateness and effectiveness of any practice is dependent on project- and site-specific conditions. Not all practices will be appropriate to address the impacts of a given project.

Sample Minimization Measures for Social and Environmental Burdens

- Incorporate pollinator-friendly design as defined by securing a silver certification or higher from the University of Massachusetts Clean Energy Extension Pollinator Friendly Certification Program.

- Reduce heat island effects, including by creating natural spaces with shade trees and native vegetated ground cover, installing shade canopies, and reducing exposed paved area.
- Use electric-powered mowers or contract with a solar grazing business to use livestock to control vegetation in place of fossil fuel-powered equipment.

Sample Minimization Measures for Social and Environmental Burdens

- Implement measures that qualify as Site Suitability Score Modifiers for social and environmental benefits.
- On-site preservation in perpetuity and enhancement of existing habitat.
- On-site habitat restoration through enrichment planting of native species.
- Implement reforestation or afforestation practices with native tree and plant species on the Site Footprint.
- Create expanded recreational opportunities, such as walking trails or community gardens.
- Apply community solar bill credits to electric utility customer accounts or otherwise lowers energy costs in the Local Government.
- Establish publicly available EV charging stations.
- Establish cultural easements, in consultation with tribal and indigenous communities and conferring with organizations that have relationships with the tribal and indigenous communities.
- Create and maintain local jobs, apprenticeship programs, and educational initiatives through a formal commitment.