

Land Types for Solar Development

This document is intended to provide stakeholders with more information and resources regarding the land use types identified in DOER's next solar program straw proposal, which currently would provide no tariff-based incentive for solar projects sited in the following areas:

1. Wetland Soils

See: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/watersheds/wetlands-protection.html>

<http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/images/dep/omv/wetviewer.htm>

2. Prime Farmland Soils

Prime Farmland: Land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for economically producing sustained high yields of food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops, when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods.

Farmland of Unique Importance: Land other than prime farmland or farmland of statewide importance that might be used for the production of specific high value food and fiber crops. Examples of such crops are tree nuts, cranberries, fruit, and vegetables. In Massachusetts, Unique soils are confined to mucks, peats, and coarse sands. Cranberries are the primary commercial crop grown on these soils. The presence of other crops on these soils is usually, possibly always, limited to small, incidental areas.

Farmland of Statewide Importance: This is land, in addition to prime and unique farmlands, that is of statewide importance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oil seed crops, as determined by the appropriate state agency or agencies. Generally, these include lands that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods.

See: <http://www.mass.gov/anf/research-and-tech/it-serv-and-support/application-serv/office-of-geographic-information-massgis/datalayers/soi.html>

3. Prime Forest Land

See: <http://www.mass.gov/anf/research-and-tech/it-serv-and-support/application-serv/office-of-geographic-information-massgis/datalayers/primeforest.html>

4. BioMap2 Core Habitat

See: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dfw/natural-heritage/land-protection-and-management/biomap2/>

5. Designated Priority Habitat

Priority Habitat is based on the known geographical extent of habitat for all state-listed rare species, both plants and animals, and is codified under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA).

See: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dfw/natural-heritage/regulatory-review/regulatory-maps-priority-and-estimated-habitats/>

6. Article 97 Land

Article 97 land or former Article 97 land.

See: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/mepa/about-mepa/eea-policies/eea-article-97-land-disposition-policy.html>

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/state-parks-beaches/land-use-and-management/land-protection/how-is-land-protected.html>

7. Forest Land under Chapter 61

Chapter 61 or former Chapter 61 land.

"Forest land", land devoted to the growth of forest products. Upon application, the state forester may allow accessory land devoted to other non-timber uses to be included in certification.

Must be parcels of not less than 10 contiguous acres or larger.

8. Archaeological sites listed in the State Register of Historic Places or Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth

See: <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcstreg/streg.htm>

See: <http://www.mass.gov/anf/research-and-tech/it-serv-and-support/application-serv/office-of-geographic-information-massgis/datalayers/srhp.html>