Traffic Light Project Survey Tools

FARMER SURVEY

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American Farmland Trust, in partnership with New York Farm Bureau, is conducting this brief 10-15 minute survey of New York farmers as part of its 2021 Traffic Light Project to guide smart solar siting on farmland in New York. This project aims to understand farmer engagement with solar development, classify farmland into three categories: red (stop—don't site solar, conserve), yellow (caution—site solar with mitigation), and green (go—priority for siting solar), and to make recommendations to achieve smarter solar siting on farmland as the state accelerates renewable energy development in rural areas. **Farmer input, opinions, and needs are central to this project, and so your participation is essential**. The answers you provide will be kept anonymous and only shared in aggregate, so please share your honest feedback and opinions on all questions.

Thank you in advance for taking 10-15 minutes to complete this brief anonymous survey by Midnight July 11th, 2021 to improve solar siting on farmland in New York state!

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1. In which county/counties is your farm located? (Please check all that apply)

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The following questions will ask you about your experience with and opinions on solar development on your farm and on farmland in New York. With the exception of the first question, this survey will ask only about solar arrays hosted on farms that generate electricity for off farm use.

2. Do you generate renewable energy on your farm property for on-farm use?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No
   - ❑ I don't know
3. To your knowledge, are solar developers proposing or building solar projects to generate electricity for off-farm use on farmland in your community?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No **SKIP TO QUESTION 7**
   - ❑ I don't know **SKIP TO QUESTION 7**

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4. Given the current level of interest from solar developers to site projects on farmland in your community, what impact do you think this land use change will have on the continued viability of farming in your community?

- ❑ Very Negative Impact
- ❑ Mostly Negative Impact
- ❑ Neutral or Mixed Impact **SKIP TO QUESTION 7**
- ❑ Mostly Positive Impact **SKIP TO QUESTION 7**
- ❑ Very Positive Impact **SKIP TO QUESTION 7**
- ❑ I don't know enough to comment **SKIP TO QUESTION 7**

5. Please Explain: _____

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6. Which of the following actions by solar developers would help alleviate some or all of your concerns? (Please check all that apply)
   - ❑ Developer permanently protects other farmland in the community
   - ❑ Developer pays a mitigation fee per-acre based on the quality of the farmland impacted
   - ❑ Developer must ensure project allows for continued farming activities in and around solar panels
   - ❑ I'm not sure
   - ❑ None of the above
   - ❑ Other:_____
7. How has solar development impacted your ability to rent land? (please check all that apply)
   - ❑ I don't rent farmland
   - ❑ No impact even though I rent farmland
   - ❑ I have lost access to land I used to rent
   - ❑ It is making land to rent more expensive
   - ❑ It is making land to rent more scarce
8. Please check any of the following that apply to hosting solar panels on your farm to generate electricity <u>for off-farm use</u>**:**
   - ❑ I would only consider siting solar on the worst farmland I have **SKIP TO QUESTION 14**
   - ❑ I would site solar panels on marginal fields **SKIP TO QUESTION 14**
   - ❑ I would transition <u>a portion of</u> my productive fields into solar **SKIP TO QUESTION 14**
   - ❑ I would transition <u>all</u> of my fields out of production and into solar **SKIP TO QUESTION 14**
   - ❑ My answer depends on how much developers are paying to site on my land **SKIP TO QUESTION 14**
   - ❑ I am not interested in hosting solar panels on my farm under any circumstances
   - ❑ Other:_____ **SKIP TO QUESTION 14**

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9. Please choose whether you think solar developers should be allowed to site solar panels to generate electricity for off farm use on the following farmland types throughout New York:

	Always	**Sometimes**	**Never**
Most productive farmland (NYS Mineral Soil Groups 1 and 2)			
Farmland with slight limitations (NYS Mineral Soil Groups 3 and 4)			

Farmland with moderate limitations (NYS Mineral Soil Groups 5 and 6)			
Marginal Cultivated Land (NYS Mineral Soil Groups 7 and 8)			
Land not suitable for pasture or cultivated use (NYS Mineral Soil Groups 9 and 10)			
Actively Farmed Land, regardless of soil type			
Underutilized Farmland, regardless of soil type			
All Farmland			

10. Please Explain:
11. Have you been in touch with a solar developer to host solar panels that will generate electricity for off-farm use?
    - ❑ Yes, a solar developer contacted me
    - ❑ No
    - ❑ I don't know
12. Would any of the following services or information help you decide whether to host solar panels on your farm at some point in the future? (please check all that apply)
    - ❑ Legal advice
    - ❑ Information on the financial costs and benefits
    - ❑ Information on the impacts to farmland soils over time
    - ❑ Information on local, state, or federal policies that impact solar siting on my farmland
    - ❑ Information about opportunities to permanently protect my farmland
    - ❑ Education on options available to continue farming in and around solar panels
    - ❑ None, I am not interested
    - ❑ Other:_____
13. Under what conditions would you be willing to host solar panels on your farmland that will generate electricity **for off-farm use**: (please check all that apply) **SKIP TO QUESTION 31**
    - ❑ To earn extra income
    - ❑ To help pass the farm on to the next generation
    - ❑ If I can't find a successor to continue farming
    - ❑ To continue farming in and around solar panels
    - ❑ Other:_____

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14. Please choose whether you think solar developers should be allowed to site solar panels to generate electricity for off farm use on the following farmland types throughout New York:

	Always	**Sometimes**	**Never**
Most productive farmland (NYS Mineral Soil Groups 1 and 2)			
Farmland with slight limitations (NYS Mineral Soil Groups 3 and 4)			

Farmland with moderate limitations (NYS Mineral Soil Groups 5 and 6)			
Marginal Cultivated Land (NYS Mineral Soil Groups 7 and 8)			
Land not suitable for pasture or cultivated use (NYS Mineral Soil Groups 9 and 10)			
Actively Farmed Land, regardless of soil type			
Underutilized Farmland, regardless of soil type			
All Farmland			

15. Please Explain:
16. Are you, or is the current landowner, leasing farmland to a solar developer to generate electricity for off farm use?
    - ❑ Yes, for a project in operation
    - ❑ Yes, for a potential project
    - ❑ No, but there are ongoing discussions with a solar developer to do so
    - ❑ No **SKIP TO QUESTION 25**
    - ❑ I don't know **SKIP TO QUESTION 25**

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17. What is your/their motivation for leasing land to a solar developer? (please check all that apply)
    - ❑ To reduce energy bills
    - ❑ To provide supplementary income
    - ❑ To fight climate change
    - ❑ To pass the farm to the next generation
    - ❑ I'm not sure
    - ❑ Other:_____
18. How many acres are, or might be, leased to the solar developer? ____
19. How may this impact the farm operation over time?
    - ❑ No impact
    - ❑ This will enable the farm to continue producing
    - ❑ This will downsize the farm operation
    - ❑ The farm will stop producing altogether
    - ❑ I'm not sure
    - ❑ Other:_____
20. Please choose one of the following to describe the solar array (to be) hosted on the farm::
    - ❑ This project is for community solar involving only my farm
    - ❑ This project is for large scale solar involving several other farms
    - ❑ Other:_____
    - ❑ I'm not sure
21. Please characterized the prior state of the farmland that is or might be leased to the solar developer: (Please check all that apply)
    - ❑ Marginal
    - ❑ Productive and Actively Farmed

- ❑ Productive and Not Actively Farmed
- ❑ I'm not sure

22. How long, in years, might the lease last if all options to extend are exercised?
23. Does your contract with the solar developer require them to remove all installations and return the land to a farmable state at the end of the project?
    - ❑ Yes
    - ❑ No
    - ❑ I'm not sure
24. Please share your approximate lease payment amount per acre you are or will be receiving: **SKIP TO QUESTION 31**
    a. During the scoping or holding period: $_____
    b. When the project is built: $ _____

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25. Have you been in touch with a solar developer to host solar panels that will generate electricity for off-farm use?
    - ❑ Yes, a solar developer contacted me
    - ❑ Yes, I or the landowner contacted a solar developer
    - ❑ No
    - ❑ I don't know
26. What services or information would help you decide whether to host solar panels on the farm? (please check all that apply)
    - ❑ Legal advice
    - ❑ Information on the financial costs and benefits
    - ❑ Information on the impacts to farmland soils over time
    - ❑ Information on local, state, or federal policies that impact solar siting on my farmland
    - ❑ Information about opportunities to permanently protect my farmland
    - ❑ Education on options available to continue farming in and around solar panels
    - ❑ None, I am not interested **SKIP TO QUESTION 30**
    - ❑ Other:_____

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27. Under what conditions would you be willing to host solar panels on your farmland that will generate electricity **for off-farm use**: (please check all that apply)
    - To earn extra income
    - To help pass the farm on to the next generation
    - If I can't find a successor to continue farming
    - To continue farming in and around solar panels
    - Other:_____
28. If you own farmland, what percentage of the land you own would you be interested in leasing to a solar developer to generate electricity **for off farm use**? ____
29. How might this impact your current farm operation? **SKIP TO QUESTION 31**
    - ❑ This will enable my operation to continue
    - ❑ No impact

- ❑ This will shrink my operation
- ❑ I will stop farming altogether
- ❑ I'm not sure

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30. Under what conditions would you be willing to host solar panels on your farmland that will generate electricity **for off-farm use**: (please check all that apply)
    - ❑ To earn extra income
    - ❑ To help pass the farm on to the next generation
    - ❑ If I can't find a successor to continue farming
    - ❑ To continue farming in and around solar panels
    - ❑ Other:_____

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31. As a farmer, would you be willing to engage in any of the following activities in order to keep farming on the solar project site in the future? (Please check all that apply)
    - ❑ Growing crops under and around solar panels
    - ❑ Navigating tractors and farm equipment under and around solar panels
    - ❑ Grazing sheep under and around solar panels
    - ❑ Raising other livestock under and around solar panels
    - ❑ Committing to permanently protecting farmland after the life of the solar project
    - ❑ Other:_____
32. Please provide any further comments or opinions on how best to site solar installations on New York farmland: _____
33. Have you considered permanently protecting your farmland?
    - ❑ I have successfully protected some or all of my land
    - ❑ I am in the process of protecting some or all of my land
    - ❑ I am interested, but need more information
    - ❑ I am not interested
    - ❑ I do not own the land I farm, but want my landowner to protect it
    - ❑ Other:_____

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34. American Farmland Trust will hold follow up conversations later this year to inform and refine the final products for the Traffic Light project, and also engages in continued policy development and advocacy to keep land in farming and keep farmers on the land in New York. Your input in these continued efforts is extremely valuable.

    If you are willing to engage in any of these follow up conversations in the future, please provide your name and email below.

    Name:

    Email:

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These final six questions will collect important general information about the farm.

35. Please choose the option that best describes your role in the farm operation:
    - ❑ I am the landowner
    - ❑ I am the owner-operator
    - ❑ I am the spouse of the owner-operator
    - ❑ I am the farm manager
    - ❑ I am an employee
    - ❑ Other (please specify)
36. Which of the following do you primarily grow or raise on your farm? (Please check all that apply)
    - ❑ Vegetables
    - ❑ Fruit/Orchard
    - ❑ Flowers/herbs
    - ❑ Hay
    - ❑ Soy
    - ❑ Corn
    - ❑ Wheat
    - ❑ Dairy
    - ❑ Beef
    - ❑ Poultry
    - ❑ Other:_____
37. In 2020, what was the approximate gross revenue from farm sales?
    - ❑ Less than $10,000
    - ❑ $10,000-$24,999
    - ❑ $24,999-$49,999
    - ❑ $50,000-$99,999
    - ❑ $100,000-$249,999
    - ❑ $250,000-$499,999
    - ❑ Over $500,000
38. How many acres, on average, were a part of the farm operation over the past 3 years?
39. Of those total acres, approximately how many are:
    a. Owned: _____
    b. Rented: _____
40. Please select your age from the ranges below.
    - ❑ <35 **SKIP TO END OF SURVEY**
    - ❑ 35-45 **SKIP TO END OF SURVEY**
    - ❑ 45-55 **SKIP TO END OF SURVEY**
    - ❑ 55-65
    - ❑ 65-75
    - ❑ 75+

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41. Is there an identified successor working on the farm?
    a. Yes
    b. No

c. I don't know

END SURVEY

ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATION AND LAND TRUST SURVEY

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American Farmland Trust is conducting this brief survey of local governments, and New York land trusts and environmental organizations as part of its 2021 Traffic Light Project, with thanks to the LTA Conservation Partnership Program, to guide smart solar siting on farmland in New York. This project will engage stakeholders to classify farmland into three categories: red (stop—and conserve), yellow (caution—site with mitigation), and green (go—priority for solar), and to make recommendations to achieve smarter solar siting on farmland as the state accelerates renewable energy development in rural areas.

We recommend that the person responsible for farmland conservation, climate, and/or renewable energy issues at your organization take this survey. **Your experience, input, and opinions are critical to this project, and so your participation is essential**. All responses will remain confidential and won't be attributed to the individual taking the survey, so please share honest feedback and opinions on all questions and work to reflect your organizations' positions and perspective, as opposed to your personal opinions, as much as possible.

Thank you in advance for taking 20 minutes to complete this brief survey **by close of business Friday, July 9th, 2021** to help inform tools that may improve solar siting on farmland in New York state!

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1. Organization Name: _____
2. Title: _____
3. Email: _____
4. I work for a:
   - ❑ Land Trust working on, or interested in, protecting farmland in New York
   - ❑ Regional, Statewide, or National environmental organization interested in balancing renewable development and conservation **SKIP TO QUESTION 15**
   - ❑ None of the Above **SKIP TO END OF SURVEY**

1. Please select all counties within your service area. [checklist of all NYS counties]

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The following questions will ask about solar development intended to generate electricity for off-farm use taking place on farmland in your community or service area, and your opinions on its impacts.

2. To your knowledge, are solar developers proposing or building solar projects to generate electricity for off-farm use on farmland in your service area?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No **SKIP TO QUESTION 14**
   - ❑ I don't know **SKIP TO QUESTION 14**

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3. How familiar are you with these projects?
    a. Very familiar
    b. Somewhat familiar **SKIP TO QUESTION 11**
    c. Not at all familiar **SKIP TO QUESTION 14**

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4. How many solar projects have been proposed on farmland in your service area that have gone or are going through local permitting review at the following scales? (if you are not sure of this level of detail, please share the total number only)
    - 5 MW or less (~35 acres or less)_____
    - 5-10MW (~35 to 70 acres)_____
    - 10-20MW (~70 to 140 acres) _____
    - 20 to 25MW (~140 to 175 acres) _____
    - Total: _____
5. How many solar projects in your service area that are going through the state's 94-c or Article X processes are proposed to be sited on farmland? _____
6. To the best of your ability, please quantify the approximate percentage of farmland acres proposed to host solar projects in your service area out of the total amount of available farmland: _____
7. Given the current level of interest from solar developers to site projects on farmland in your service area, what impact do you think this land use change will have on the continued economic viability of farming in your region? (please choose one answer)
    - ❑ 1 – Negative Impact
    - ❑ 2—Some Negative Impact
    - ❑ 3 – Mixed or Neutral Impact **SKIP TO QUESTION 14**
    - ❑ 4 –Mostly Positive Impact **SKIP TO QUESTION 14**
    - ❑ 5 – Positive Impact **SKIP TO QUESTION 14**
    - ❑ I don't know enough to comment **SKIP TO QUESTION 14**
8. Please explain what positive or negative impacts you anticipate:_____

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9. Which of the following actions by solar developers would help mitigate the impact of solar development on farmland loss and/or on farm viability in your region to alleviate some or all of your concerns? (Please check all that apply)
    - ❑ Developer pays a mitigation fee per-acre based on the quality of the farmland impacted **to be administered as part of the state Farmland Protection program**
    - ❑ Developer pays a mitigation fee per-acre based on the quality of the farmland impacted to be used by a qualified entity **to protect farmland** in the community
    - ❑ Developer pays a mitigation fee per-acre based on the quality of the farmland impacted to be used **to invest in the continued economic viability of farming** in the community
    - ❑ Developer must ensure project allows for continued farming activities under and around solar panels that improve soil health
    - ❑ I'm not sure
    - ❑ None of the above

- ❑ Other:_____

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The next five questions will ask for your professional opinion about where solar should always, sometimes or never be allowed on farmland in New York state, and which other attributes to consider in the face of solar development.

10. Please choose whether you think solar developers should always, sometimes, or never be allowed to site solar panels to generate electricity for off farm use on the following farmland types throughout New York: **SKIP TO QUESTION 16 UPON COMPLETION**

	Always	**Sometimes**	**Never**	**I'm not sure**
Most productive farmland (NYS Mineral Soil Groups 1 and 2)				
Farmland with slight limitations (NYS Mineral Soil Groups 3 and 4)				
Farmland with moderate limitations (NYS Mineral Soil Groups 5 and 6)				
Marginal Cultivated Land (NYS Mineral Soil Groups 7 and 8)				
Land not suitable for pasture or cultivated use (NYS Mineral Soil Groups 9 and 10)				
Actively Farmed Land, regardless of soil type				
Underutilized Farmland, regardless of soil type				
All Farmland				
Forested land on Farms				

11. Please choose whether you think solar developers should always, sometimes, or never be allowed to site solar panels to generate electricity for off farm use on the following farmland types throughout New York:

	Always	**Sometimes**	**Never**	**I'm not sure**
Most productive, or prime, farmland				
Farmland with limitations (limits the type of crops that can be grown)				
Marginal Cultivated Land				
Land not suitable for pasture or cultivated use				
Actively Farmed Land, regardless of soil type				
Underutilized Farmland, regardless of soil type				
All Farmland				
Forested land on Farms				

12. Please explain your responses: _____

13. Please choose whether you think solar developers should always, sometimes, or never be allowed to site solar panels to generate electricity to inject into the grid on land with the following environmental attributes:

	Always	**Sometimes**	**Never**
Wetlands			
100-year Floodplains			
Coastal Flood Zones			
Forested Areas			
Riparian Buffers			
Wildlife Connecting Corridors			
Sensitive Wildlife Habitats (eg. Important bird areas)			
High Biodiversity Areas			

14. Please explain your responses: _____
15. What further considerations should be taken into account (environmental justice, economic, cultural, social) when considering siting solar on farmland or when making policy recommendations on this topic? Please be as specific as possible: _____

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These final questions will ask about your organizations' experience with solar development on protected and unprotected farmland, how your organization has or would like to engage in the future, and what resources you need to do so successfully.

16. Have you been approached by solar developers, community members, and/or farmers to support or prevent a solar project from taking place on farmland in your service area?
    a. Yes
    b. No **SKIP TO QUESTION 22**
    c. I'm not sure **SKIP TO QUESTION 22**

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17. Please share your experience, including who contacted you to take a position, how you were asked to engage, and how you did end up engaging and why:_____
18. Have farmers who have protected land through your organization inquired about their ability to host solar arrays on that protected land? (Please check all that apply)
    - ❑ Yes, to generate electricity for their own on-farm use
    - ❑ Yes, to generate electricity for off-farm use
    - ❑ No **SKIP TO QUESTION 24**
    - ❑ I'm not sure **SKIP TO QUESTION 24**

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19. Was the farmer ultimately able to construct this project on their protected land?

20. Have there been cases in your experience when farmers who were working to, or were interested in, protecting their farmland withdrew due to signing a solar lease?
    - ❑ Yes
    - ❑ No **SKIP TO QUESTION 26**
    - ❑ I'm not sure **SKIP TO QUESTION 26**
    - ❑ The inverse happened—a farmer decided to protect their land after rejecting a solar lease

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21. Please share details from this case to the extent you are able, including how much more money they were, or would have been, able to get by hosting solar panels:_____
22. How would your organization like to be able to engage with solar development on farmland in the future? (Please check all that apply)
    - ❑ We would be interested in facilitating mitigation projects, such as farmland protection, in the community
    - ❑ We are interested in learning how to site solar on protected farmland
    - ❑ We are interested in learning more about how to advance dual use (farming and generating solar energy on the same parcel)
    - ❑ We would be interested in learning about and advising municipalities, developers, farmers or others on best practices for siting solar on farmland
    - ❑ Other:_____
23. What tools, information, or resources does your organization need to be able to engage in this way? (Please check all that apply)
    - ❑ Information about the solar industry, energy development potential in the future, grid capacity, project economics, etc.
    - ❑ Information on the permitting processes solar developers must go through
    - ❑ Maps showing which farmland to prioritize and which farmland to avoid for solar siting
    - ❑ Maps of Prime Farmland (or other classifications) in your region
    - ❑ Information on successful mitigation projects that led to farmland protection
    - ❑ Information on the impacts of solar projects on soils over time
    - ❑ Information about what dual use projects are possible in New York at this time
    - ❑ Information on solar lease rates throughout the region
    - ❑ Information on developers investments in the community and how those investments might be able to be geared towards farming
    - ❑ Other:_____
24. How would your organization prefer developers mitigate the impact that solar development to generate electricity for off farm use may have on farmland in your service area or in the state? (please check all that apply) **NOT SEEN BY QUESTION 9 RESPONDENTS**
    - ❑ Developer pays a mitigation fee per-acre based on the quality of the farmland impacted **to be administered as part of the state Farmland Protection program**
    - ❑ Developer pays a mitigation fee per-acre based on the quality of the farmland impacted to be used by a qualified entity **to protect farmland** in the community
    - ❑ Developer pays a mitigation fee per-acre based on the quality of the farmland impacted to be used **to invest in the continued economic viability of farming** in the community

- ❑ Developer must ensure project allows for continued farming activities under and around solar panels
- ❑ Developer must construct, operate, and decommission the project in a way that preserves the ability of the land to be farmed in the future
- ❑ I'm not sure
- ❑ None of the above
- ❑ Other:_____

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25. Please provide any further comments or opinions on how best to site solar installations on New York farmland: _____
26. American Farmland Trust plans to host two regional roundtables in late October/early November of 2021 to further inform the Traffic Light Project. If you would be willing to join one of these roundtable sessions to provide further opinions and feedback on a draft traffic light framework for New York, please share your name and email below.
    - Name: _____
    - Email:_____

END SURVEY

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SURVEY

PAGE 1

American Farmland Trust is conducting this brief survey of local governments in partnership with the NYS Association of Towns and the NYS Association of Counties as part of its 2021 Traffic Light Project. This project aims to engage stakeholders to inform the classification of farmland into three categories: red (stop—and conserve), yellow (caution—site with mitigation), and green (go—priority for siting solar), and to make recommendations to achieve smart solar siting on farmland as the state accelerates renewable energy development in rural areas.

We recommend that town supervisors, town planning board chairs, code enforcement officers involved in renewable projects, and/or county planners take this survey. **Your experience, input, and opinions are critical to this project, and so your participation is essential**. Please share your honest feedback and opinions on all questions reflecting your county or municipality's positions as much as possible. All responses will remain confidential and won't be attributed to the individual taking the survey.

Thank you in advance for taking 20 minutes to complete this brief survey **by COB Friday July 16th, 2021** to inform tools that may improve solar siting on farmland in New York state!

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1. Please select whether you work for a town or county:
    - ❑ Town
    - ❑ County
2. Which County or Municipality do you work for? _____

3. Your Title: _____
4. Are you also a farmer?
    - ❑ Yes
    - ❑ No
5. Are solar developers proposing or building solar projects on farmland within your county or municipality?
    - ❑ Yes
    - ❑ No **SKIP TO QUESTION 22**
    - ❑ I don't know **SKIP TO QUESTION 22**

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6. How familiar are you with these solar projects?
    - ❑ Very familiar
    - ❑ Somewhat familiar **SKIP TO QUESTION 16**
    - ❑ Not at all familiar **SKIP TO QUESTION 22**

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The next few questions will ask for your opinion as a farmer on siting solar both on your farm, and on farmland through New York.

7. How has solar development impacted your ability to rent land? (please check all that apply)
    - ❑ I don't rent farmland
    - ❑ No impact even though I rent farmland
    - ❑ I have lost access to land I used to rent
    - ❑ It is making land to rent more expensive
    - ❑ It is making land to rent more scarce
8. Please check any of the following that apply to hosting solar panels on your farm to generate electricity <u>for off-farm use</u>**:**
    - ❑ I would only consider siting solar on the worst farmland I have
    - ❑ I would site solar panels on marginal fields
    - ❑ I would transition <u>a portion of</u> my productive fields into solar
    - ❑ I would transition <u>all</u> of my fields out of production and into solar
    - ❑ My answer depends on how much developers are paying to site on my land
    - ❑ I am not interested in hosting solar panels on my farm under any circumstances **SKIP QUESTIONS 11-14**
    - ❑ Other:_____
9. Please choose whether you think solar developers should be allowed to site solar panels to generate electricity for off farm use on the following farmland types throughout New York: **SKIP QUESTION 22**

	Always	**Sometimes**	**Never**

Most productive farmland (NYS Mineral Soil Groups 1 and 2)			
Farmland with slight limitations (NYS Mineral Soil Groups 3 and 4)			
Farmland with moderate limitations (NYS Mineral Soil Groups 5 and 6)			
Marginal Cultivated Land (NYS Mineral Soil Groups 7 and 8)			
Land not suitable for pasture or cultivated use (NYS Mineral Soil Groups 9 and 10)			
Actively Farmed Land, regardless of soil type			
Underutilized Farmland, regardless of soil type			
All Farmland			

10. Are you, or is the current landowner, leasing farmland to a solar developer to generate electricity for off farm use? (please choose one)
    - ❑ Yes, for a project in operation
    - ❑ Yes, for a potential project
    - ❑ No, but there are ongoing discussions with a solar developer to do so
    - ❑ No **SKIP TO QUESTION 13**
    - ❑ I don't know **SKIP TO QUESTION 13**

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11. How may this impact the farm operation over time?
    - ❑ No impact
    - ❑ This will enable the farm to continue producing
    - ❑ This will downsize the farm operation
    - ❑ The farm will stop producing altogether
    - ❑ I'm not sure
    - ❑ Other:_____
12. Please characterized the prior state of the farmland that is or might be leased to the solar developer: (please check all that apply) **SKIP TO QUESTION 15 UPON COMPLETION**
    - ❑ Marginal
    - ❑ Productive and Actively Farmed
    - ❑ Productive and Not Actively Farmed
    - ❑ I'm not sure
13. Have you been in touch with a solar developer to host solar panels that will generate electricity for off-farm use?
    - ❑ Yes, a solar developer contacted me
    - ❑ Yes, I or the landowner contacted a solar developer (in track for those not interested, remove answer choice)
    - ❑ No
    - ❑ I don't know

14. Under what conditions would you be willing to host solar panels on your farmland that will generate electricity **for off-farm use**: (please check all that apply)
    - ❑ To earn extra income
    - ❑ To help pass the farm on to the next generation
    - ❑ If I can't find a successor to continue farming
    - ❑ To continue farming in and around solar panels
    - ❑ Other:_____
15. Have you considered permanently protecting your farmland? (please choose one)
    a. I have successfully protected some or all of my land
    b. I am in the process of protecting some or all of my land
    c. I am interested, but need more information
    d. I am not interested
    e. I do not own the land I farm, but want my landowner to protect it
    f. Other:_____

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The following questions will ask about solar development proposed or constructed on farmland in your municipality that is intended to generate electricity for off-farm use.

16. How many solar projects are being proposed on farmland in your county or municipality that are going through local permitting review at the following scales?
    - ❑ Projects generating 5 MW or less (~35 acres or less)_____
    - ❑ Projects generating 5-10MW (~35 to 70 acres)_____
    - ❑ Projects generating 10-20MW (~70 to 140 acres) _____
    - ❑ Projects generating 20–25MW (~140 to 175 acres) _____
17. How many solar projects are being proposed on farmland in your county or municipality that are going through the state's 94-c or Article X permitting processes? _____
18. To the best of your ability, please quantify the approximate percentage of farmland acres proposed to host solar projects in your county or municipality: _____
19. Given the current level of interest from solar developers to site projects on farmland in your county or municipality, what impact do you think this land use change will have on the continued economic viability of farming in your community? (please choose one answer)
    - ❑ Very Negative Impact
    - ❑ Mostly Negative Impact
    - ❑ Mixed or Neutral Impact
    - ❑ Mostly Positive Impact
    - ❑ Very Positive Impact
    - ❑ I don't know enough to comment
20. Please explain what positive or negative impacts you anticipate:_____
21. How would your county or municipality prefer developers mitigate any potential negative impact that siting solar to generate electricity for off farm use may have on farmland availability or the economic viability of farming in your community? (please check all that apply)
    - ❑ Developer pays a mitigation fee per-acre based on the quality of the farmland impacted **to be administered as part of the state Farmland Protection program**

- ❑ Developer pays a mitigation fee per-acre based on the quality of the farmland impacted to be used by a qualified entity **to protect farmland in the community**
- ❑ Developer pays a mitigation fee per-acre based on the quality of the farmland impacted to be used **to invest in the continued economic viability of farming in the community**
- ❑ Developer must ensure project allows for continued farming activities under and around solar panels
- ❑ Developer must construct, operate, and decommission the project in a way that preserves the ability of the land to be farmed in the future
- ❑ We don't anticipate any negative impacts
- ❑ I'm not sure
- ❑ None of the above
- ❑ Other:_____

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The next set of questions will ask for your professional opinion about where solar should always, sometimes or never be allowed on farmland in New York state, and which other attributes to consider in the face of solar development.

22. Based on local priorities and/or official documents (eg. farmland protection plan), please choose whether your county or municipality would like solar developers to always, sometimes, or never be allowed to site solar panels on the following farmland types:

	Always	**Sometimes**	**Never**	**I'm not sure**
Most productive, or prime, farmland				
Farmland with limitations (limits the types of crops that can be grown)				
Marginal Cultivated Land				
Land not suitable for pasture or cultivated use				
Actively Farmed Land, regardless of soil type				
Underutilized Farmland, regardless of soil type				
All Farmland				
Forested land on farms				

23. Please explain your responses: _____
24. Based on local environmental priorities and/or official documents (eg. comprehensive plans), please choose whether you think solar developers should always, sometimes, or never be allowed to site solar panels to generate electricity to inject into the grid on land with the following environmental attributes:

	Always	**Sometimes**	**Never**	**I'm not sure**
Wetlands				
100-year Floodplains				
Coastal Flood Zones				
Forested Areas				

Riparian Buffers				
Wildlife Connecting Corridors				
Sensitive Wildlife Habitats (eg. Important bird areas)				
High Biodiversity Areas				

25. Please explain your responses: _____
26. What further considerations should be taken into account (environmental justice, economic, cultural, social) when considering siting on farmland or when making policy recommendations for siting solar on farmland? Please be as specific as possible: _____

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27. How would your county or municipality prefer developers mitigate any potential negative impact that siting solar to generate electricity for off farm use may have on farmland availability or the economic viability of farming in your community? (please check all that apply)
    - ❑ Developer pays a mitigation fee per-acre based on the quality of the farmland impacted **to be administered as part of the state Farmland Protection program**
    - ❑ Developer pays a mitigation fee per-acre based on the quality of the farmland impacted to be used by a qualified entity **to protect farmland in the community**
    - ❑ Developer pays a mitigation fee per-acre based on the quality of the farmland impacted to be used **to invest in the continued economic viability of farming in the community**
    - ❑ Developer must ensure project allows for continued farming activities under and around solar panels
    - ❑ Developer must construct, operate, and decommission the project in a way that preserves the ability of the land to be farmed in the future
    - ❑ We don't anticipate any negative impacts
    - ❑ I'm not sure
    - ❑ None of the above
    - ❑ Other:_____

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These final questions will ask about local land use laws and policies that guide farmland protection and the siting of solar on farmland in your community, and what resources your county or municipality needs to maximize renewable energy development while minimizing the impact on farmland and farm viability.

28. My county or municipality protects farmland and/or promotes farm viability in the following ways: (Please check all that apply)
    - ❑ Has a right to farm law
    - ❑ Allows flexibility in local regulations to accommodate the needs of farm businesses
    - ❑ Allows rural enterprises compatible with agriculture in farm areas
    - ❑ Has agricultural zoning that limits the impact of development on farmland

- ❑ Has a detailed section on agriculture in our comprehensive plan
- ❑ Implements this plan through zoning, ordinances, or other processes
- ❑ Has identified areas to support farming over the long term
- ❑ Has a strategy to protect the best farmland
- ❑ Has supported farmland protection projects within the municipality
- ❑ Encourages the use of agricultural conservation easements through PDR and/or TDR
- ❑ Encourages the use of Agricultural Tax Assessment
- ❑ Does Site Plan Review for Proposed Development on Farmland
- ❑ Incorporates Agricultural Districts
- ❑ Has a County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
- ❑ Has a County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan
- ❑ Other:_____

29. Does your town, or do municipalities within your county, have local land use laws or processes that guide the permitting of solar projects on farmland in a way that also promotes farmland protection?
    - ❑ Yes
    - ❑ No **SKIP TO QUESTION 33**
    - ❑ We currently have a moratorium on solar development **SKIP TO QUESTION 33**
    - ❑ I'm not sure
30. Which of the following elements are included in these land use laws to balance renewable development and farmland protection? (If you do not currently have laws governing siting, please indicate which elements your municipality might *like* to include)
    - ❑ Protection of some soil types (eg. prime farmland) from solar development
    - ❑ Protection of land in active agriculture from solar development
    - ❑ Encourage development of Dual Use projects (farming and solar energy generation on the same parcel)
    - ❑ Requirement to mitigate impacts to farmland through farmland protection
    - ❑ Requirement to follow NYSAGM guidelines for construction, operation, and decommissioning of solar projects
    - ❑ None of the above **SKIP TO QUESTION 33**
    - ❑ Our Solar Land Use Laws don't consider farmland protection **SKIP TO QUESTION 33**
    - ❑ Other:_____

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31. Did your town use any county or regional planning resources (eg. Guidance from county planning, Tug Hill Commission white paper) in developing this solar land use policy? If so, please share this resource: **IF TOWN, SKIP QUESTION 32**
32. Does your county provide any technical assistance to help municipalities within the county balance renewable energy development with farmland protection efforts? If so, please share these resources: **IF COUNTY, SKIP QUESTION 31**

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33. What other issues come up in your local community around siting solar on farmland? (eg. Visual impacts, noise) _____

34. Please provide any final comments or opinions on how best to site solar installations on New York farmland: _____
35. What resources can American Farmland Trust provide that will help inform better decision making, local laws, planning, and/or permitting that will balance renewable energy development with farmland protection in your municipality?
36. American Farmland Trust plans to host two regional roundtables in late October/early November of 2021 to further inform the Traffic Light Project. If you would be willing to join one of these roundtable sessions to provide more opinions and feedback on the topics in this survey, please provide your name and contact information below.
    a. Name:_____
    b. Email:_____

END SURVEY