

STATES OF JERSEY



RESTRICTION ON SOLAR GROUND MOUNTS ON AGRICULTURAL LAND – PETITION (P.53/2026): COMMENTS

**Presented to the States on 20th March 2026
by the Minister for the Environment**

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

Summary

The proposition is brought forward with commendable intent, and the Deputy's efforts to represent the views of petitioners are recognised.

In respect of part (a) of the proposition, however, the appropriate mechanisms for determining future land use- policy and assessing development proposals already exist within Jersey's established democratic and statutory frameworks. In particular, the shape of the next island plan will be determined by the next Assembly which cannot be bound by decisions of this one.

The island plan review process and, in the meantime, the assessment of individual planning applications for this form of development, provide robust, transparent and evidence-based systems for evaluating the relative merits and impacts of solar development on agricultural land. These processes, with which all stakeholders can fully engage, allow for balanced judgments that take full account of energy, environmental and agricultural policy objectives and the wider public interest.

For these reasons, endorsement from this Assembly of part (a) of the proposition which seeks a blanket prohibition on solar ground-mounted arrays on agricultural land, outside of the statutory plan-making process, is not supported.

Part (b) is, however, consistent with Government policy and is deemed acceptable.

Comment

Part (a) – is not supported and Members are urged to reject this part.

It is evident that the development and location of energy generating infrastructure is of considerable public interest.

Whilst the Deputy's efforts to represent petitioners and bring this matter forward for debate are acknowledged the endorsement of a prohibition of any form of development is not considered to be appropriate outside of the statutory plan-making framework.

The process for reviewing and adopting the Island Plan is established in law and provides a transparent, democratic and evidence-based mechanism for determining land-use policy. Any attempt to pre-determine the content of a future plan in advance of this process risks undermining the integrity of the statutory system and cannot bind a future Minister or Assembly.

In addition to the plan-making process, the existing planning application system allows individual planning applications to be assessed on their specific merits. This enables detailed evaluation of the potential benefits of this form of development to be assessed on a case-by-case basis relative to agricultural value, site characteristics, environmental effects and proposed management arrangements, including decommissioning and land restoration.

The current bridging Island Plan already contains a balanced and robust policy framework for assessing proposals for terrestrial solar development.

- Policy UI2 – Utilities infrastructure facilities, requires proposals, where they are outside the built-up area, to demonstrate that the development cannot reasonably be provided for on alternative sites before a countryside location might be supported.
- Policy ME6 - Larger-scale terrestrial renewable energy developments, supports such development only where the benefits demonstrably outweigh any environmental or agricultural harm, with a clear preference for the use of former glasshouse sites and requirements for time-limited permissions and land restoration.

These policies sit alongside others which seek to protect high-quality agricultural land and to support rural diversification, ensuring that all relevant considerations are weighed appropriately through the planning application process.

There is also a need to acknowledge that the States Assembly has endorsed the Carbon Neutral Roadmap (CNR) which provides the wider strategic context when considering the nature of the island's current and future energy supply. The CNR emphasises the need to balance affordability, energy security and environmental sustainability - the 'energy trilemma'. Solar energy could contribute positively to this balance and restricting options as to the location of renewable energy-generating infrastructure may constrain future energy planning.

For these reasons, a request to impose a blanket prohibition on solar arrays on agricultural land for incorporation in the next island Plan, as set out in part (a) of the proposition, does not warrant support. Instead, decisions on future policy and individual proposals should continue to be made through the established, democratic and evidence-based processes designed to exactly address these issues and Members are urged to reject part (a) of the proposition.

Part (b): - is considered acceptable

Part (b) is consistent with existing Government policy.

A framework agreement has been signed with the Jersey Electricity Company for the installation of rooftop solar PV on government-owned properties. A programme is in development with a view to the first installations taking place this year.

It should be noted that solar PV has been included for the planned refurbishment at Springfield Stadium and Government House and that the Government Building, Union Street already has solar PV installed.

Accordingly, further to discussions at the Council of Ministers on 19th March 2026, part (b) is accepted.

Statement under Standing Order 37A

The Minister wishes to apologise for submitting late comments. This was due to high volume of workload, in recent weeks, in the lead up to the final States Sitting and administrative delays. The Minister felt it would still be beneficial for the Assembly for this comment to still be lodged.