

# STATES OF JERSEY



## RESTRICTION ON SOLAR GROUND MOUNTS ON AGRICULTURAL LAND - PETITION

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Lodged au Greffe on 19th February 2026  
by Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade  
Earliest date for debate: 24th February 2026

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STATES GREFFE

## **PROPOSITION**

**THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –**

- (a) that there should be a prohibition on solar ground mounts on agricultural land, and to request the Minister for the Environment to include such prohibition in the next Island Plan; and
- (b) to request the Minister for Infrastructure, in consultation with the Minister for the Environment, to bring forward a policy framework to promote the installation of solar panels on all suitable States of Jersey owned buildings.

DEPUTY M. TADIER OF ST. BRELADE

## REPORT

To begin, I would like to recognise the work that has gone into the petition that accompanies this proposition, and the 801 petitioners themselves. It is no small task for the organisers to compose, circulate, and collect the petition. In an increasingly digital age, where it might just take a moment to sign and then share an online link, the *old school* paper petition, differs materially in that it often requires a lot of face-to-face interaction, conversations, explanations and engagement. All of this should be commended from a democratic point of view, irrespective of what one's final opinion is of the question in hand.

(I have stated that I am *broadly* sympathetic to the cause of the petitioners, and I will clarify that below. But because my position is not completely aligned in all areas, I have attached their own report as an appendix to this proposition).

Turning to that question, whether our fields in Jersey should, as a matter of course, be used as locations for solar panels, this is clearly a subject which does engage people across a whole number of areas. There are considerations of economics, tourism and agriculture *inter alia*. Most importantly, perhaps, it engages us to think about the environment in more ways than one. Solar panels can be seen as a good thing. They harness renewable energy. There is then the question of **where** they should be placed, and to what extent, in a small island, with limited agricultural space, precious fields should be given over, whether in part or in whole, to these panels; and if they are, what is the impact on agricultural activity and on the wider environment.

I have agreed to sponsor this petition for the following reasons. The first is out of a deep respect for the democratic process. Paper petitions are a long-standing part of the Jersey tradition. The organisers of the petition explained that they had decided to contact me as I had experience in lodging paper petitions on behalf of the public.

Moreover, this is a subject of topical importance to a broad cross section of the public and it is something that I broadly have sympathy with.

To clarify, my personal position is that I support both the concept and practice of renewable energy. I also support solar panels. Part of that, as I will explore below, is not so much to address the question of achieving our carbon neutral objectives, – the point is made quite clearly in the petitioners' report (see Appendix 1) that Jersey already benefits from low carbon, 'clean' energy from France – but for the potential cost savings and autonomy it can provide to households in the island.

That said, I am open to the idea that there could well be circumstances in which it might make sense to allow for some parts of fields to have solar panels on them. I cannot see, however, that this should be in the first instance and certainly not when Government is so far behind in leading by example and examining their own property portfolios for the potential for suitable placements. And, I think, there also needs to be wider consideration about energy conservation, which means starting with better insulation, before moving onto considering wider Solar Panel opportunities for all suitable new builds.

In short, my starting position is that **Jersey fields should be kept for agriculture**. If we are to be more environmental and more sustainable, we should be looking first and foremost to being more self-sufficient in terms of food. Food security remains a critical

area for us, and at this time of year especially, we are mindful that we are only need a few days of stormy weather to find that many of the shops' shelves are empty.

Personally, I do not have any problem with JEC looking to effectively diversify their energy supply.

This is an area where I perhaps part company with the petitioners, who in their report state:

*'We do not understand what is to be gained by diversifying our energy sources. We rely on France for 95% of our energy needs and that is not going to change anytime soon. The electricity from France is certified to be low carbon already so what is the point of diversifying into another low carbon source?'*

To me, diversification seems sensible for a variety of reasons. Just because Jersey may not be able to be 100% self-sufficient, does not mean we should not take steps to be *less* dependent on imported electricity. Whilst French energy is low carbon, some 70%<sup>1</sup> of its energy is generated from Nuclear, which is not without its potential problems and risks.

Where I do agree fully with the petitioners is when they refer to the example of sheep being grazed at a field in St Clement.

*We argue that these "opportunities" are available regardless of solar farms being installed. There is available land for sheep farming in Jersey - sheep are used on the lowest quality agricultural land worldwide, not high-quality land.*

They are, of course correct, you do not need to put solar panels on a field in order to make it fit for sheep. Putting any kind of non-agricultural structure on a field will necessarily limit options for, particularly arable, cultivation. Roofs, car parks, bike sheds, are places where solar panels can easily go and which do not place agriculture and renewable electricity into competition or tension.

I also have a concern that tenant farmers could be displaced in favour of renting the space for solar panels if it is considered more profitable for the landowner to do the latter. In time, this might lead to much of our agricultural land-bank being given over to 'solar harvesting' rather than for genuine subsistence or economic agriculture.

Whilst it might not be the overriding concern, one downside to this scenario would be the impact it has on the character of the island, not least from a visitor point of view. Jersey markets itself, in part, as having *golden beaches, blue sea, brown cows and green fields*.

Not to be dismissed, either, are the concerns of residents, walkers, cyclists -all those who enjoy the countryside on daily basis - who risk seeing our landscapes changed profoundly and not for the better. So, there is also a well-being aspect to be taken into consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> [Nuclear Power in France - World Nuclear Association](#)

There is also the question of political responsibility in all of this. The protection of Jersey's agricultural landbank is a matter that is provided for under the law, specifically, in the Agricultural Land (Control of Sales and Leases) (Jersey) Law 1974.<sup>2</sup>

Article 2 (1) of that law provides that *no person shall enter into any contract for the lease of any agricultural land without the consent of the Minister.*

Article 2 (2) continues that *the Minister may refuse consent to or may grant consent unconditionally or with conditions;*

*and that in deciding, the Minister shall have particular regard to the desirability of reserving agricultural land for the use of bona fide inhabitants of Jersey engaged wholly or mainly in work of an agricultural or horticultural nature in Jersey, and ensuring that any lease of agricultural land is on terms that encourage the continued cultivation of the land in accordance with the principles of good husbandry.*

A response to a recent written question [WQ-47-2026.pdf](#) (see Appendix 2) on this subject from HM Attorney General stated '*that dual use of agricultural land following the installation of solar panels is therefore **not necessarily** inconsistent or incompatible with the 1974 Law but will depend on the circumstances*' [my emphasis applied].

He also stated that "*Where a statute uses language like "shall have particular regard", it means that the factor is to be given importance and weight and is not just a 'run of the mill' consideration, thus underlining the inherent purpose of the 1974 Law, which is to preserve a land bank available for Jersey farmers and its cultivation.*"

It is clear to me that one needs to look at the spirit of the law here and not just the letter. Moreover, the use of the word 'encourage' in the context of '*ensuring that any lease of agricultural land is on terms that encourage continued cultivation*' might be interpreted by a Minister as meaning that installing solar panels could be installed on a field if it made a field more likely to be cultivated for farming, for example, in a situation where a landowner farmer could not realise enough profit to make farming on its own viable, but where the installation of some solar panel might.

However, I am not sure this is what we have in the current scenarios, and further questions, this time directed to the Minister for the Environment, ahead of this debate, may also be an opportunity to clarify exactly what *importance and weight* he did give to his considerations in granting the relevant permissions for the current uses of Jersey fields where solar panels are present.

In moving this proposition, I deliberately do so in two parts, mindful that some members have already expressed ambivalence towards the use of solar panels on fields thinking that they might be beneficial in certain circumstances; most people I have spoken to, inside and outside the States, do however think there is an opportunity to do more when it comes to solar panels on roofs, etc.

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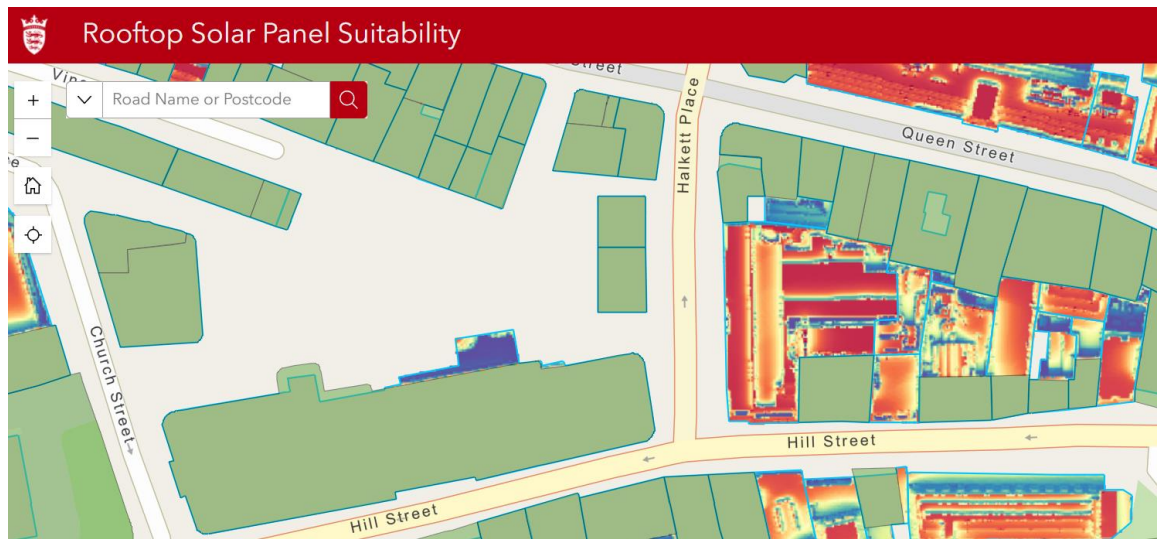
<sup>2</sup> [Agricultural Land \(Control of Sales and Leases\) \(Jersey\) Law 1974](#)

Finally, I am pleased to draw attention to the fact that Government *has* already taken some initial action in this area with the launch of its [Rooftop Solar Panel Suitability Map](#)<sup>3</sup>

This is described as ‘*an information tool to raise awareness and help Islanders consider whether investing in solar PV [photo-voltaic] could be a viable option.*’

I also note that the same communication on 28 November 2025 stated that ‘*the Government is also close to agreeing a Framework Agreement for solar PV installations on Government-owned properties, which will help accelerate the adoption of renewable energy across the public estate.*’

A section of the map below shows that whilst the States Assembly and Royal Court buildings themselves may not be suitable for PV, a large part of Morier House and Hill Street, are well suited!



### **Financial and staffing implications**

There are no financial and manpower implications arising from this proposition.

### **Children’s Rights Impact Assessment**

I consider that this proposition has no direct or indirect impact on children and that the duty to have due regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child does not arise. Accordingly, a Children’s Rights Impact Assessment is not required under the Children (Convention Rights) (Jersey) Law 2022.

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<sup>3</sup> [Government launches Rooftop Solar Panel Suitability Map](#) – Press release, **28 November 2025**

## APPENDIX 1

Submission from Petitioners –

801 valid signatures

### **JE’s plans for solar farms under its “Solar 5000” project**

JE has installed three solar farms in Jersey so far - St Clement, Sorel and Rue d’Olive St Mary. JE applied for planning permission in 2024 to install a farm at Champs Vert St Mary but withdrew the application in 2025 before it was considered by the Planning Committee due to significant opposition from St Mary residents and questions raised by Deputy Ian Gorst. In 2025 JE announced plans to install a farm at Belle Fontaine St Martin however on 5 February 2026 they announced that they had decided not to progress with those plans. JE have stated that they have plans for six solar farms in Jersey. They state that these solar farms would need to cover 74 acres of farmland - or more than 30 typically sized fields. There has been widespread opposition to the St Martin plans from both neighbouring residents as well as Islanders more generally. The St Martin plans, were they have to progressed to a planning application, were viewed as a “test case” as the three currently installed sites went somewhat “under the radar” and did not face concerted opposition during the planning process.

There are established groups of Islanders who have already objected to the Champs Vert application and who planned to object to any application for the St Martin site. There is also more widespread opposition to the whole concept of solar farms being installed on agricultural land in Jersey. In December 2025 a paper petition was launched seeking support for a ban on solar farms on agricultural land but encouraging their use on buildings e.g. new housing developments, commercial premises, schools etc. More than 800 signatures have been obtained so far. Interestingly, when seeking signatures the feedback from the public has been overwhelmingly in support of the petition and it has also been noted that there is widespread lack of awareness of exactly what JE are planning to do regarding solar farms. The intention is that Deputy Montfort Tadier will use this petition as support for a proposition to the States of Jersey. He plans to bring that proposition to the States during February 2026.

### **Background to electricity supply in Jersey**

Approximately 94% of Jersey’s electricity is imported from France under a contract with EDF. Approximately 5% is generated by the La Collette incinerator. The remainder comes from solar panels (installed both on roofs and on land). JE state that they procure certificates of guarantee of origin for low carbon electricity from EDF and that their strategy is “to import low carbon power from nuclear and certified hydro-electric sources”.

JE is investing significant amounts in upgrading its back-up generators at La Collette and The Powerhouse and is also upgrading the interconnector link with France in the coming years. Under its “Solar 5000” project JE aims to have 25 megawatts peak (MWp) of solar capacity by 2030 using both roof mounted and ground mounted installations.

The first installed site at St Clement has 4.3MWp capacity and the two newer installed sites at Sorel and Rue d’Olive St Mary have a combined total of 6.6MWp capacity. JE

states that the St Clement site will generate around 5 gigawatt hours (GWh) annually so as a rough estimate we could expect all of their installed and planned sites to generate around 30GWh annually. In 2024 total electricity consumption in Jersey was 616GWh so that 30GWh of solar generation (assuming all sites had been installed) would have represented only around 5% of Jersey's total annual electricity needs.

JE forecasts that achieving the Government's 2050 net zero targets will increase peak electricity demand by 25% and result in an overall increase in annual unit sales by 70%. So, if all solar farms are installed as currently planned and assuming no more are installed, the percentage of the Island's needs covered by solar generation would fall from 5% to around 2.9% (616GWh x 1.7 / 30GWh).

### **JE's stated rationale for solar farms**

JE provide various reasons to justify the investment in solar farms in Jersey. We have analysed each of these and believe that the justifications provided by JE do not stand up to scrutiny. Dealing with each of these in turn:

#### **1. JE states that solar farms will “strengthen Jersey’s energy diversity, sovereignty and resilience”.**

We do not understand what is to be gained by diversifying our energy sources. We rely on France for 94% of our energy needs and that is not going to change anytime soon. The electricity from France is certified to be low carbon already so what is the point of diversifying into another low carbon source? Interestingly, JE confirm this exact point on their own website in the section which advises homeowners in relation to the installation of solar PV panels on their private properties. JE state: “Jersey’s electricity grid is already virtually decarbonised which means installing solar panels will not materially reduce your home's carbon footprint because the electricity produced by solar panels will simply be replacing low carbon grid electricity with low carbon solar electricity”.

Jersey will never gain energy sovereignty in the way that a major country could do. As stated above, we rely on France for 94% of our electricity. Even if we generate 5% from solar this will not mean we have sovereignty. Even if Jersey were to build an offshore wind farm this would not provide sovereignty as on some days the wind does not blow. You can't “strengthen” sovereignty - you either have it or you do not.

A similar point can be made regarding resilience. JE is quite rightly investing heavily to ensure we have up to date reliable back-up generators on Island to cover our needs if the supply with France is interrupted. This back up generation can cover 100% of demand if needed. It is being sized so that it can cope with the projected increases in peak demand and overall annual consumption. Solar power would cover only 5% of demand and only if this was needed in the middle of a sunny day, not a stormy winter night. So in reality solar does nothing meaningful to help our resilience.

#### **2. JE states that solar generation is “now broadly cost comparable” with imported electricity.**

JE refuse to give us details of their current EDF contract or details of the exact pricing of imported electricity. We can only conclude that electricity generated from solar farms in Jersey costs more than imported electricity. We also note that EDF have huge solar

farms in France and when these are producing peak power in the middle of a sunny day there is an excess of supply in France. This is likely to be at the same time as any solar panels in Jersey are producing electricity. Would this not be reflected in the price JE would need to pay for electricity at those times of peak supply?

### **3. JE states that beyond energy generation, solar delivers wider benefits for Jersey:**

#### **First, it “supports the rural economy by providing new agricultural opportunities for farmers”.**

An example given is the sheep which are being grazed under the St Clement solar farm. We would argue that these “opportunities” are available regardless of solar farms being installed. There is available land for sheep farming in Jersey - sheep are used on the lowest quality agricultural land worldwide not high quality land. The reality is that sheep farming on a tiny scale in a high cost jurisdiction with high export costs is not profitable and the farmer at St Clement is doing this as a “hobby” rather than a commercial enterprise. There is no scope for sheep farming on a larger scale. No farmer in Jersey is going to want to grow crops within solar farms as the land is very difficult to access with a tractor when compared to a normal field. In addition, much of the land will be permanently shaded by the south facing solar panels and there are very few commercially viable crops, if any, which can be grown in such conditions. Furthermore, we understand that solar panels in solar farms need to be regularly cleaned to maintain their efficiency (this will particularly be the case in Jersey given our salty climate and the fact that the panels will be surrounded by all the trees that JE intend to plant) and that across the world this is typically done using a tractor mounted brush system on an extending arm, with the tractor driving along the rows between panels. This again limits the feasibility of cultivating any crops in the spaces between the panels.

#### **Second, it “develops new jobs and skills on Island through solar array design, installation and maintenance, with expertise that could also be exported beyond Jersey into other parts of the Channel Islands”.**

We would ask why are these jobs necessary? In practice we see that most of the contractors named at the solar farms currently being installed are not Jersey based. Also, the solar farms in Jersey are minuscule compared to those in the UK and the rest of Europe so we are never going to be cost effective in creating local expertise. Why would this expertise be exported to the other Channel Islands? It seems even more unlikely that there will be solar farms in Guernsey, Sark or Alderney given the density of population in Guernsey and the remoteness and size of Sark and Alderney. In any event, why do JE think they should be spending money training people for roles in other jurisdictions?

#### **Third, it “delivers biodiversity net gain through enhanced habitats, soil restoration, flora, fauna and ecological management”.**

That may be true in relation to poor quality land which is not able to be cultivated (although there are still many question marks even in that situation) but the reality is that JE has used, and is proposing to use, high quality agricultural land for its solar farms. The St Clement site was stated to be poor quality agricultural land. This evidence came in part from the landowner who, we would argue, was conflicted in making that assessment as we understand JE pay £525 per vergee per annum to rent land for their solar farms whereas the going rate that farmers are prepared to pay for growing potatoes

etc is £150 per vergee per annum. We have interviewed five well established Jersey farmers who tell us that the land which has been used for the St Clement solar farm is in fact in the top 10% of agricultural land in Jersey and they know of several farmers who would have been very keen to rent that land for agricultural use if it had been offered to them. As regards the proposed St Martin site (which is now not proceeding), we understand that JE had stated that the eight fields forming the solar farm are poor quality land. Again, the five farmers we have spoken to have stated that in their view that block of eight contiguous fields (which have a central water supply in the form of a permanent reservoir at their heart) rank in the “top five“ of all blocks of agricultural land in Jersey. The proposed Champs Vert site at St Mary envisages that cider apple trees would be planted around the panels and in one field - these trees can be planted irrespective of whether there is a solar farm.

**Fourth, it “supports one of the largest tree planting programmes on the Island, including more than 7,000 trees and over one kilometre of new hedgerow”.**

That may be true, but of course JE could plant those trees and hedgerows without installing any solar farms so this cannot be a valid justification.

**Fifth, it “provides support for Jersey Trees for Life and the National Trust who are working on our planting initiatives”.**

Again, this is a completely spurious justification. If JE want to support those organisations it could do so without installing solar farms.

**4. JE state that solar generation will “effectively behave like a “natural hedge” given that it will have a largely fixed cost profile over a 40 year period” and will “help to deliver long-term price stability for customers”.**

Given that they envisage that solar farms would generate at maximum 5% of Jersey’s total electricity needs (and progressively less than that as the Island’s consumption increases over time) we do not see that this is an effective hedge. The “price stability” will come largely from the precise terms of the new contract to be signed with EDF and the Euro/GBP sterling currency hedging which JE currently undertake.

### **Effect of JE’s plans for solar farms on JE’s profitability**

As stated above, there is a groundswell of public disquiet regarding the use of agricultural land in Jersey for solar farms. Any new planning applications from JE for solar farms are going to face significant public objection. We note that JE’s headcount has increased considerably in recent years (a report on the Jersey electricity industry by EY which was published in 2025 states that there was a 25% increase in the number of FTE employees between 2018 and 2023) and we suspect much of that relates to the solar initiative. Aside from the objections on environmental grounds, we are concerned that the solar initiative is increasing costs for JE and thereby impacting profitability. This affects all JE shareholders directly but also all Jersey taxpayers given that JE is majority Government owned and the Government expects to earn a dividend from its shareholding. We are also concerned about the distraction of JE management due to the solar initiative as well as the opportunity cost of resources which are being expended on the PR exercise of trying to justify the initiative to an increasingly hostile public. We understand that JE feels it has a role to play in Jersey’s road towards net zero but we

feel this is already being discharged through its many other initiatives e.g. encouraging electric home heating and electric car take up.

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO H.M. ATTORNEY GENERAL  
BY DEPUTY M. TADIER OF ST. BRELADE  
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 16th FEBRUARY 2026  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 23rd FEBRUARY 2026**

**Question**

“In light of the obligations placed upon the Minister for the Environment by Article 2 of the [Agricultural Land \(Control of Sales and Leases\) \(Jersey\) Law 1974](#), namely that the Minister shall have “particular regard to the desirability of reserving agricultural land for the use of bona fide inhabitants of Jersey engaged wholly or mainly in work of an agricultural or horticultural nature in Jersey” and that he shall ensure “that any lease of agricultural land is on terms that encourage the continued cultivation of the land in accordance with the principles of good husbandry”, will HM Attorney General state whether the construction of solar farms on agricultural land is compatible with the fulfilment of those obligations?”

**Answer**

The Agricultural Land (Control of Sales and Leases) (Jersey) Law 1974 (“the 1974 Law”) defines “agricultural land” to mean “*land, including land under glass, used or capable of being used for any purpose of agriculture or horticulture, but does not include any dwelling house or outbuilding;*”. Under Article 2 of the 1974 Law, no sale, transfer, or lease of agricultural land is allowed without the Minister’s consent. Article 2(2) of the 1974 Law provides:

*“The Minister may refuse consent to any transaction to which this Article refers or may grant consent either unconditionally or subject to such conditions as the Minister thinks fit and, in deciding whether or not to grant consent or otherwise, the Minister **shall have particular regard** to the desirability of reserving agricultural land for the use of bona fide inhabitants of Jersey engaged wholly or mainly in work of an agricultural or horticultural nature in Jersey, and ensuring that any lease of agricultural land is on terms that encourage the continued cultivation of the land in accordance with the principles of good husbandry.”*[Emphasis applied]

Where a statute uses language like “*shall have particular regard*”, it means that the factor is to be given importance and weight and is not just a ‘run of the mill’ consideration, thus underlining the inherent purpose of the 1974 Law, which is to preserve a land bank available for Jersey farmers and its cultivation.

Whether any transaction involving agricultural land which includes a solar farm proposal is compatible with encouraging “*the continued cultivation of the land in accordance with the principles of good husbandry*” would depend on the design of the solar panels and whether, once in situ, their arrays and any other equipment would be a

material impediment to the land being used for any purpose of agriculture or horticulture.

The dual use of agricultural land following the installation of solar panels is therefore not necessarily inconsistent or incompatible with the 1974 Law but will depend on the circumstances.