

STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

Petition of Northland Solar LLC for a Certificate of Public Good, pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 248, authorizing the installation and operation of a 4.999 MW solar electric generation facility off Route 100 in Lowell, Vermont to be known as the “Northland Solar Project”	Case No. 25-2346
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PREFILED DIRECT TESTIMONY OF
MICHAEL and PAMELA TETREAULT, TETREAULT FARMS LLC
On behalf of the Town of Lowell and Michael and Pamela Tetreault

13 March 2026

Exhibits:

TL-MPT-1 USDA Policy on Prime Agricultural Land and Solar Development
TL-MPT-2 American Farmland Trust Smart Solar Guiding Principles

Summary:

Michael Tetreault addresses the project’s impacts under 30 V.S.A. §248(b)(5), including aesthetics, the natural environment, primary agricultural soils, and public health and safety., and provides evidence regarding the unsuitability of the proposed site, which is located on prime agricultural land and within one of Lowell’s most scenic and heavily traveled corridors.

Prefiled Testimony of Michael and Pamela Tetreault

1 **1. Identification**

2 **Q1.** Please identify yourself.

3 **A1.** My name is Michael Tetreault, and I represent myself and my wife Pamela
4 Tetreault , we reside at 844 Irish Hill Road, Lowell, Vermont. We own Tetreault
5 Farm LLC a 3rd generation farm, located at 2390 VT RTE 100 in Lowell along with
6 the home located at 2419 VT RTE 100, directly adjoining the proposed Northland
7 Solar project site. I am filing this testimony as an adjoining landowner, as recognized
8 in my Notice of Intervention filed with the Commission. I am a Registered Animal
9 Nutritionist and Senior Vice President at Poulin Grain Inc, in Newport VT with 39
10 years' experience serving in Vermont Agriculture. My wife previously served as a
11 Certified Municipal Treasurer for the Town of Lowell for 16 years.

12 **2. Purpose of Testimony**

13 **Q2.** What is the purpose of your testimony?

14 **A2.** The purpose of my testimony is to address the project's impacts under 30 V.S.A.
15 §248(b)(5), including aesthetics, the natural environment, primary agricultural
16 soils, and public health and safety. I also provide evidence regarding the
17 unsuitability of the proposed site, which is located on prime agricultural land and
18 within one of Lowell's most scenic and heavily traveled corridors.

1 **3. Relationship to the Project Site**

2 **Q3.** Please describe your property in relation to the proposed project.

3 **A3.** My property directly adjoins the proposed solar facility. The project lies within
4 my daily travel corridor, within clear view from Route 100 and Route 58, and across
5 from the Lowell School. My family has lived in Lowell for five generations now, and
6 the area surrounding the project site is recognized in the Town Plan as a scenic
7 agricultural landscape. The project would fundamentally alter the character and
8 visual quality of this area.

9 **4. Suitability of the Site**

10 **Q4.** Based on your knowledge of the area, is this an appropriate location for a 4.999
11 MW solar facility?

12 **A4.** No. The proposed site is prime agricultural land, surrounded by sensitive
13 receptors including residences, the school, town offices, Mountain View Cemetery,
14 and the Route 100/58 scenic corridor. This is inconsistent with responsible siting
15 practices for a project of this scale. Similar-sized solar projects in Essex, Milton, St.
16 Albans, and Ferrisburgh were placed in industrial or low-visibility areas, not in the
17 center of a rural community's most valued landscape.

18 **5. Aesthetic Impacts**

19 **Q5.** What aesthetic impacts do you anticipate?

20 **A5.** The project would create an undue adverse aesthetic impact for several reasons:
21 it would replace open agricultural fields with a fenced industrial array; it would
22 dominate views from Route 100, Route 58, the Lowell School, and multiple

1 residences; it would permanently alter a landscape specifically identified in the
2 Town Plan as scenic; and no feasible screening can mitigate the impact without
3 blocking mountain views. The project fails the Quechee Test because the impact is
4 both adverse and unreasonable.

5 **6. Impact on Primary Agricultural Soils**

6 **Q6.** How would the project affect agricultural resources?

7 A6. The site consists of prime and statewide important agricultural soils, which are
8 essential to Lowell's working landscape and long-term food security. Once
9 compacted, graded, or covered by solar infrastructure, these soils cannot be
10 restored. Siting a nearly 5 MW industrial facility on this land contradicts Vermont's
11 statutory protections for primary agricultural soils.

12 **7. Community and Safety Concerns**

13 **Q7.** How will the project affect public use and safety?

14 A7. The project is located directly across from the Lowell School, along a corridor
15 heavily used by school buses, families, and agricultural equipment. The fencing,
16 traffic, and industrial appearance of the facility will negatively affect the school
17 environment and the safety of the area. As an adjoining landowner, I am also
18 concerned about glare, which could impact drivers and nearby residences. A formal
19 glare analysis is necessary.

20 **8. Process and Community Engagement**

21 **Q8.** Do you have concerns about the developer's outreach?

1 **A8.** Yes. Northland Solar evaluated this site for nearly two years with minimal
2 community engagement. This is inconsistent with Lowell's prior experience during
3 the Kingdom Community Wind process, where residents had multiple opportunities
4 to participate and vote. For a project of this magnitude, one public meeting is
5 insufficient.

6 **9. Requested Action**

7 **Q9.** What action are you requesting from the Commission?

8 **A9.** I respectfully request that the Commission deny the Certificate of Public Good
9 due to the project's undue adverse impacts on aesthetics, primary agricultural soils,
10 public health and safety, the natural environment, and the scenic and rural character
11 of Lowell. If the project is approved, I request conditions including a site visit, a
12 public hearing, a glare analysis, and compensation for any loss of property use.

13 **11. Developer Commitment and Pattern of Siting on Agricultural Land**

14 **Q11.** Do you have concerns about the developer's long-term commitment to the
15 project and its relationship to the agricultural community?

16 **A11.** Yes. Northland Solar, LLC and its parent entity, MHG, operate strictly as
17 developers. Their business model is to identify sites, secure permits, and then
18 transfer ownership or operational responsibility to another company. They are not
19 long-term land stewards, nor do they have any ongoing commitment to the
20 agricultural community in Lowell. This is significant because the party selecting the
21 site is not the party who will live with the long-term consequences of converting
22 prime agricultural land into an industrial facility. Northland Solar's decision to

1 target productive farmland—rather than commercial rooftops, brownfields, gravel
2 pits, or other disturbed lands—reflects a siting approach that does not account for
3 the economic, cultural, or environmental importance of agricultural soils in Lowell.
4 Agriculture and agritourism are central to the town’s identity and economy. The
5 proposed site sits within one of Lowell’s most visible scenic corridors, directly
6 across from the school and surrounded by working farms. Converting this land into
7 a nearly 5 MW industrial array undermines the agricultural character that draws
8 visitors, supports local businesses, and sustains the community’s long-term viability.
9 Because MHG–Northland Solar does not intend to own or operate the facility long-
10 term, they have little incentive to avoid harm to the agricultural community, the
11 scenic corridor, or the tourism economy that depends on Lowell’s working
12 landscape. This disconnect between short-term development objectives and the
13 community’s long-term interests is inconsistent with responsible siting and with
14 Vermont’s statutory protections for primary agricultural soils. It also raises
15 concerns under §248’s orderly development and aesthetics criteria, as the
16 developer’s approach does not reflect a commitment to minimizing impacts or
17 aligning with local values.

18 **12. Decommissioning Fund and Failure to Demonstrate Restoration of Prime**
19 **Agricultural Land**

20 **Q12.** Do you have concerns about the proposed \$165,000 decommissioning fund?

21 **A12.** Yes. The proposed \$165,000 decommissioning fund is not supported by any
22 detailed cost analysis, and it is not sufficient to ensure that the site can be restored

1 to its pre-project condition as prime agricultural land. Decommissioning a nearly 5
2 MW industrial solar facility requires removal of thousands of posts, anchors,
3 underground conduit, transformers, fencing, access roads, and compacted areas. It
4 also requires soil decompaction, regrading, and restoration of agricultural
5 productivity—tasks that are significantly more complex and costly than simply
6 removing panels. The developer has not provided evidence that \$165,000 is
7 adequate to perform these activities. In similar Vermont cases, decommissioning
8 estimates for projects of comparable size have exceeded this amount, even without
9 the added requirement of restoring prime soils to agricultural use. The cost of heavy
10 equipment, labor, trucking, disposal, and soil remediation has increased
11 substantially in recent years, and no inflation factor or contingency is included in
12 the developer’s estimate. Most importantly, the developer has not demonstrated
13 that the site can be returned to prime agricultural condition at any cost. Once soils
14 are compacted, graded, or disturbed by trenching and infrastructure, their structure
15 and productivity cannot be fully restored. The decommissioning plan does not
16 address this reality, nor does it include any agronomic assessment of what would be
17 required to rehabilitate the soils. Because the decommissioning fund is
18 unsupported, underestimated, and does not guarantee restoration of agricultural
19 function, it fails to meet §248’s requirement that the project not unduly interfere
20 with the orderly development of the region or harm primary agricultural soils. A
21 decommissioning estimate that does not reflect the true cost of restoring the land is
22 effectively a cost shift onto the community and future landowners.

1 **13. What is the US Department of Agriculture's support for the use of Prime Agricultural**
2 **Lands for solar?**

3 **A13.** With USDA stating that 'our prime farmland should not be wasted and
4 replaced with subsidized solar panels and prohibiting federal funding for large
5 ground-mounted solar on productive soils, why would Vermont permit industrial
6 solar development on the very prime agricultural land the federal government now
7 treats as a national-security asset? *Exhibit TL-MPT-1*

8 **14. Does the Northland Solar Proposed Project support the principals outlined**
9 **by the American Farmland Trust?**

10 **A14.** American Farmland Trust's Smart Solar principles clearly state that solar
11 should be prioritized on rooftops, carports, brownfields, and other land 'not well
12 suited for agriculture' and that farmland is already being lost at a rate of 2,000 acres
13 per day. Given these facts, why would we choose to site industrial solar on
14 Vermont's most productive soils instead of following AFT's nationally recognized
15 guidance to protect farmland and avoid long-term harm to agricultural viability?
16 *Exhibit TL-MPT-2*

17 **10. Conclusion**

18 **Q10.** Does this conclude your testimony?

19 **A10.** Yes. I reserve the right to supplement this testimony as additional information
20 becomes available.

Affidavit of Michael and Pamela Tetreault

1. I have provided pre-filed testimony and exhibits in the above-captioned matter.
2. I have personal knowledge of the information provided in my pre-filed testimony.
3. I am able to testify as to the validity of the information contained in my pre-filed testimony and exhibits.
4. I declare that the foregoing statements are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand that if the above statement is false, I may be subject to sanctions by the Commission pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 30.

Dated at Lowell Vermont this 11 day of MARCH 2026.

Mike Tetreault
Name

Pamela Tetreault 3/11/26