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List of Counties with High Conversion Pressure As of 17 April 2025

Background

Per the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry (DACF) Chapter 575 rules titled “*Permitting Solar Energy Developments on High-Value Agricultural Land*” ([01-001 C.M.R. Ch. 575](#)) and statute titled “*An Act Regarding Compensation Fees and Related Conservation Efforts to Protect Soils and Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat from Solar and Wind Energy Development and High-impact Electric Transmission Lines Under the Site Location of Development Laws*” ([P.L. 2023, Ch. 448](#)), solar energy development projects that are 20+ acres in size and located on at least one contiguous acre of high-value agricultural land (HVAL) may owe a compensation fee. Please refer to the Chapter 575 rules for a full description of what types of solar projects may require a compensation fee.

Conversion Pressure

Solar energy developments located in counties with high conversion pressure may be subject to higher compensation fees than those located in counties without high conversion pressure. This document lists the top six counties with high conversion pressure at the time of its publication. It will not be updated more frequently than once every three years and will be re-evaluated no sooner than April 2028.

Conversion Pressure Definition

“Conversion pressure” is the strain on counties caused by the prevalence of development that reduces the amount of natural and working land available. It is determined by calculating the percent acreage of terrestrial land use categories within a county that have been developed into impervious surfaces as determined by DACF. DACF will post a list on its website of the top six (6) counties in Maine facing the highest conversion pressure, not to be updated more frequently than once every three (3) years. DACF will calculate conversion pressure using the most recent publicly available land cover data set from a federal or State of Maine agency, such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Geological Society, the Maine Office of GIS, or another similar agency.

High Conversion Pressure County List

- Androscoggin
- Cumberland
- Kennebec
- Knox
- York
- Sagadahoc

Data Sources

NOAA Coastal Change Analysis Program (C-CAP) 2020-2021 CCAP Version 2 Impervious Cover State of Maine. Data collected 2020-2021 : National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office for Coastal Management. Data accessed at <https://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/data/ccaphighres.html>.