

POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY SOLAR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM: 2020 – 2021 SUMMARY



Pollinator-Friendly Solar Development in Massachusetts

In November 2018, the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) established a new solar photovoltaic (PV) program governing incentives for solar arrays built in Massachusetts, known as the [Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target Program](#), or SMART. The program was updated and expanded by Emergency Regulation in April 2020. The updated program includes a specific incentive of \$0.0025/kWh for solar facilities developed as “pollinator-friendly,” meeting the requirements of UMass Clean Energy Extension’s (CEE) Pollinator-Friendly Solar Certification Program at the Silver level or above, or the equivalent as determined by DOER.

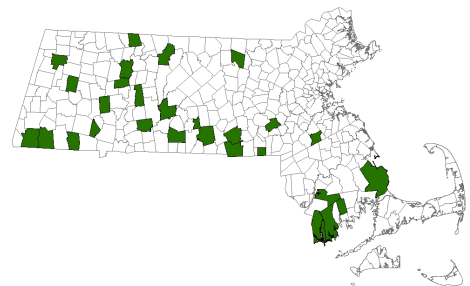
Qualification at the Silver level under UMass CEE’s program requires submission of a complete site establishment and maintenance plan, use of biodiverse native seed mixes and plantings, creation of bee nesting habitat, and avoidance of insecticide and fungicide use. Detailed information about qualification criteria and the application process can be found on the [UMass CEE website](#).

Summary of Pollinator-Friendly Projects

In **2020**, seven applications were received and all were certified at the Silver certification level.

In **2021**, 31 applications were received, and 27 were certified at the Silver certification level. As of the end of the calendar year, three are undergoing revisions by the applicant (including two received in mid-December of 2021). One application was withdrawn for a site with relatively steep slopes and large sections of ledge near the soil surface. Due to a series of midsummer storms, the applicant was concerned with potential erosion issues and wished to stabilize the site quickly with permanent vegetation, rather than apply a cover crop and seed native species in the fall.

Between 2020 and 2021, 34 solar facilities totaling 143 MW DC (89 MW AC) in capacity were certified to be developed as pollinator-friendly. Participating projects ranged in size from 0.7 to 13 MW DC, with a median size of 2.8 MW DC. Once established, these projects will provide over 600 acres of native pollinator habitat across the state. To date, eight solar development companies have participated in the program, with projects approved in nine of 14 counties (Berkshire, Bristol, Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, and Worcester).



Map of MA municipalities with certified pollinator-friendly solar facilities.