SOLAR ENERGY is an increasingly popular electricity source thanks to its low cost and zero carbon footprint. Solar expansion is happening at the same time that family farms and ranches find themselves under increased economic pressure, and this has raised questions about the potential impacts of solar arrays on other land uses, particularly farms, ranches, and wildlife. Are utility-scale solar arrays compatible with farming, livestock grazing, and conservation? The answer is—with innovation and planning—yes.

With the right design, utility-scale solar can coexist alongside healthy crops, grazing land, and wildlife. The "dual-use solar" approach combines solar development with other productive land uses, such as native plant restoration, farming, livestock grazing, and pollination. The result is expanded clean energy production, more profitable farms and ranches, and conserved wildlife habitat.
With modern best practices, solar developers can minimize land disturbance so land can be restored to its previous use after the life of a solar project. Farmers can also enjoy benefits from locating solar arrays alongside traditional agriculture. For example, the shade from solar arrays can help conserve soil moisture, resulting in longer grazing seasons and improved pollinator services for surrounding farms.

The bottom line? With a dual-use solar approach, farmers, ranchers and other landowners can maximize the productivity of their land while tapping into valuable new income.
States are using a variety of innovative tools to support dual-use solar. These include pollinator scorecards for solar sites, monetary incentives for agrivoltaics systems, and tax incentives for solar arrays that preserve agriculture uses onsite. In addition to these tools, states and municipalities can ensure new solar projects are compatible with agriculture and wildlife conservation by recognizing dual-use solar in policy design. This can include:

1. **LEGAL REVIEW** of definitions of solar generation, farmland, and farm uses in state and local laws to ensure these laws do not inadvertently preclude dual-use solar development.

2. **POLICY REVIEW** to ensure farmers are not penalized for diverse farming systems with dual-use solar.

3. **INCENTIVES** for dual-use solar approaches like tax incentives and other rebates.

By avoiding barriers to dual-use solar and adding carefully-designed incentives, states and municipalities can provide a means to generate more clean energy while helping landowners maximize the productivity of their land and generate valuable supplemental income.

**Dual-use solar is a classic win-win.**

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