

# Amendments to the National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land

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## What is the NPS-HPL?

The National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land (NPS-HPL) was introduced in 2022 to protect especially productive soils from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. Basically, it prevents urban sprawl from swallowing up land that could be used for primary production.

## What were the proposed amendments?

MPI and MfE held a consultation to determine whether new specified infrastructure (e.g., roads, flood protection) can be *established* on highly productive land (HPL). Currently, the NPS-HPL only allows existing specified infrastructure to remain or upgrade. The controversy is whether this will allow large solar farms to establish on HPL. Only low intensity primary production like sheep farming can co-exist with solar farms and even then, the government cannot require landowners to incorporate both land uses at once.

The consultation also inquired whether greenhouses and intensive indoor primary production (e.g., piggeries and poultry farms) should be allowed to establish on HPL.

## Our submission

HortNZ strongly advocated that greenhouses (and intensive indoor primary production) should be allowed to establish on HPL. New greenhouses need to meet criteria related to water access, surrounding pasture for nutrient discharge, zone, minimum parcel size, access to an energy source, flat land, distance from point of sale, distance from population centres, and distance from ancillary activities. Most of these criteria are more likely to be met on HPL.

We based our argument on the fact that greenhouses help climate-proof our food supply. Greenhouses are also a form of primary production and complement other primary production activities. We incorporated planning, legal and mapping evidence to make our case.

We recommended that the government allow new specified infrastructure to be established on HPL since that was in the intent of the original NPS, but we suggested that they add protections to ensure that new infrastructure avoids any loss of the supply of fresh fruits and vegetables. This means that new solar farms should not be allowed if they take away land used for growing fruits or vegetables.

## WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Ministry for the Environment website: [Potential amendments to the National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land | Ministry for the Environment](#)
- Keep an eye on HortNZ's website: [Land and biodiversity | Horticulture New Zealand – Ahumāra Kai Aotearoa \(hortnz.co.nz\)](#)
- Michelle Sands, HortNZ Strategy and Policy Manager: [michelle.sands@hortnz.co.nz](mailto:michelle.sands@hortnz.co.nz), 04 470 5664