Town of Buckfield
Ordinance Restricting Commercial Solar Facilities

WHERAS, the Town of Buckfield's Comprehensive Plan seeks to protect and preserve the Town's natural resources, agricultural lands, and rural character for current and future generations;

WHERAS, large-scale commercial solar facilities have the potential to significantly alter the landscape, reduce available farmland, and impact scenic and rural character that the Comprehensive Plan seeks to maintain;

WHERAS, the Town recognizes the importance of encouraging renewable energy while ensuring that such development is balanced with the community's long-term goals for land use, farmland preservation, and conservation of natural resources;

WHERAS, residential and on-site commercial solar systems provide valuable energy independence and sustainability benefits without altering the broader character of the community or removing productive farmland from use;

WHERAS, it is the intent of the Town of Buckfield to establish reasonable land use regulations that prohibit commercial solar farms while still permitting residential and on-site commercial solar systems that support homes and businesses;

Now, therefore, be it ordained by the legislative body of the Town of Buckfield that the following **Ordinance Restricting Commercial Solar Facilities** be enacted.

Section 1. Title
This ordinance shall be known and may be cited as the "Town of Buckfield Ordinance Restricting Commercial Solar Facilities."

Section 2. Definitions
For the purposes of this ordinance, the following terms shall have the meanings given:

Commercial Solar Facility: Any solar energy system, including related infrastructure and equipment, whose primary purpose is the generation of electricity for sale to the electrical grid or to off-site consumers. This does not include solar energy systems where the electricity generated is used primarily for on-site consumption by a residence or business.

On-Site Solar Energy System: A solar energy system designed and installed for the primary purpose of providing power to a residence, business, or facility located on the same lot or an adjacent lot under the same ownership.

Section 3. Purpose
The purpose of this ordinance is to prohibit the development and operation of commercial solar facilities within the Town of Buckfield, while allowing property owners to continue to utilize solar energy systems for residential and commercial use on their own property.

Section 4. Authority
This ordinance is adopted pursuant to the authority granted to municipalities under Title 30-A of the Maine Revised Statutes Annotated and the Town of Buckfield's home rule authority.

Section 5. Applicability
This ordinance applies to all property within the Town of Buckfield.

Section 6. Prohibition
1. Commercial Solar Facilities Prohibited. The construction, installation, or operation of commercial solar facilities is expressly prohibited within the Town of Buckfield.
2. Exemptions. This prohibition shall not apply to:
a. Residential solar energy systems designed and installed for the purpose of providing power to a residence located on the same property;
b. Commercial solar energy systems designed and installed for the purpose of providing power to a business, structure, or facility located on the same property. Commercial solar energy systems for on site use shall not exceed $1/8^{th}$ of an acre and must be shielded from public view if ground mounted.

Section 7. Grandfathered Facilities
Any commercial solar facility that lawfully exists on the effective date of this ordinance, or for which all necessary permits have been issued prior to the effective date of this ordinance, shall be considered a lawful non-conforming use and may continue to operate, repair, and maintain its facilities. Expansion or enlargement of such facilities is prohibited.

Section 8. Enforcement and Penalties
The Code Enforcement Officer shall enforce the provisions of this ordinance. Any violation of this ordinance shall be subject to fines and penalties as provided under Title 30-A M.R.S.A. §4452.

Section 9. Severability
If any provision of this ordinance is held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining provisions.

Section 10. Amendments
This ordinance may be amended by a majority vote of the Town's legislative body at a regular or special Town Meeting. A public hearing shall be held by the Municipal

Officers at least seven (7) days prior to the Town Meeting at which the amendment is to be considered.

Section 11. Effective Date
This ordinance shall take effect upon adoption by the legislative body of the Town of Buckfield.

Adopted June 9, 2026, at Annual Town Meeting
Article 25: Yes – 318 No – 135 Blanks – 55