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## **NFU CALLS ON OPA TO ABANDON RATE CHANGE**

**St. Marys, Ontario** – The National Farmers Union has asked the Ontario Power Authority to abandon its plan to decrease the rate paid for electricity produced by ground-mounted solar units under 10kW. It has asked the OPA to keep the same rate of 80 cents/kWh for both ground-mounted and roof-mounted solar units under 10kW until at least the 2011 review of the microFIT program.

NFU board member and St. Marys area farmer Ann Slater says, “Farmers who submitted applications for ground-mounted solar units in good faith were completely blind-sided by the July announcement that the rates would be lowered for ground-mounted solar. The credibility of the OPA, the Ontario Government and the Green Energy Act continues to plummet in the eyes of farmers as a result of this decision.”

If the OPA and the Ontario Government remain committed to lowering the rate before the 2011 review, the NFU has recommended that all 16,000 applications already submitted be grandfathered under the present rate. The 10,700 applicants in the queue without contracts or conditional offers have already invested significant time and money in their ground-mounted solar projects and some have also paid for site inspections by Hydro One. The NFU believes these applicants, most of whom are farmers, must be given the respect and dignity of being given the same rate as the 2,300 applicants with contracts or conditional offers.

In its letter the NFU also noted that since small ground-mount solar units are owned and controlled by farmers, landowners and homeowners, the financial benefits stay in the community to the benefit of rural communities and the people of Ontario. Slater commented, “This is quite different than the money paid to large industrial solar and wind projects which are owned and controlled by multinational energy companies like Enbridge and Samsung. The money paid by electricity consumers to these entities will leave the province.”

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