

NEWS RELEASE

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DESPITE MISSING INFORMATION AND CRITICISM FROM SENATORS, ORES RULES HECATE'S APPLICATION "COMPLETE"

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On Friday August 25, the Office of Renewable Energy Siting (ORES) filed a Notice of Complete Application, concluding that it now possessed sufficient information to decide whether to grant Hecate Energy a siting permit to build a utility-scale solar installation on farmland in Craryville, a hamlet within the Town of Copake. This determination came after three previous applications by the Chicago based corporation had been found to be "incomplete".

The ORES decision was issued just one week after New York State Senators Michelle Hinchey (SD-41) and Pete Harckham (SD-40) wrote to the Executive Director of ORES Mr. Houtan Moaveni, outlining potential adverse environmental and agricultural impacts of the proposed 60-megawatt solar development and urging that another site be found for the project. ORES' finding of completeness does not grant permission to build the site, but it does trigger a sixty-day period by the end of which ORES must either publish a draft permit for public comment or deny permission for Hecate to move forward.

The Town has complained that ORES' "completeness" determination was unwarranted since it ignores Hecate's failure to submit critical information previously requested by ORES. Deputy Supervisor Richard Wolf, who has spearheaded the Town's response to the Hecate application has pointed out that the corporation "has not fully addressed the impacts of its proposed 267-acre solar factory on the Taghkanic Headwaters Conservation Plan. It has failed to prove that constructing 200,000 solar panels and inverters, and drilling beneath wetlands will not adversely affect the wetlands, streams and Taghkanic Creek (an important source of Hudson's drinking water), all of which are on or under the proposed construction site".

According to Copake, Hecate has also withheld historical information from the public regarding a historically significant Native American presence near the Niver Farm (now Rasweiler Farm) Hecate has not taken sufficient precautions to ensure the 60 MegaWatt solar facility will not adversely impact Copake's nationally significant historical and cultural resources.

The criticism of Senators Hinchey and Harckham came after the two met with Copake Town officials and toured the site in Craryville. Senator Hinchey, who represents the Town of Copake, is Chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, and Senator Harckham chairs the Senate Committee on Environmental Conservation. Addressing their concerns to Mr. Moaveni they wrote: "Under the current project proposal, 140 acres of prime farmland and 76 acres of farmland of statewide importance will be rendered *unusable* because of the solar array being constructed on it."

Copake contends that Hecate's supposedly "complete" application fails to address the adverse impact of waiving local laws specifically enacted to protect Copake's high-quality farmland and rural character.

"ORES may have found that Hecate's application was good enough for them", said Jeanne E. Mettler, Supervisor of the Town of Copake, "But it is not good enough for Copake." Pointing out that Hecate is seeking permission from ORES to override 20 Copake laws, Mettler said "Hecate's proposal sacrifices prime farmland and tramples on local law. Clearly Hecate was irresponsible in choosing this site in the first place and they should not be rewarded now for their lack of care. Hecate has demonstrated a complete disregard for this small town."

"Given the large amounts of missing or incomplete information", Deputy Supervisor Richard Wolf said, "One can only hope that ORES' "Notice of Complete Application" was issued to 'put Hecate out of its misery', because ORES now understands that the proposed site is completely unsuitable for a utility-scale facility. In 60 days, ORES should tell Hecate to find another site."

Supervisor Mettler concluded, "ORES should deny Hecate's application and end this ordeal for Copake once and for all."