

Solar Update

The NYS Office of Renewable Energy Siting and Electric Transmission (ORES) informed Hecate on September 19 that its application for a siting permit to construct a 42-megawatt solar factory in Craryville had been deemed “complete.” The 60-day deadline for a decision from ORES is fast approaching, and we will soon know whether it intends to allow Hecate to build Shepherd’s Run on more than 200 acres of mostly prime farmland in Craryville.

A recent letter to ORES should give it pause. We hope ORES reads, and acts upon, a November 4 letter from Catherine Mikic, President of the Arcadian Alliance, which she sent to the Executive Director of ORES and the Deputy Commissioner of the State’s Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). In her letter, Ms. Mikic points out that ORES has “withheld from the public record” a “Letter of Adverse Determination”, dated May 15, 2024, in which SHPO concluded that Shepherd’s Run will have an “Adverse Impact” on five Copake properties that are eligible for National Register designation. SHPO made a critically important recommendation: that the solar installation be effectively screened from the five properties. The SHPO letter, which Ms. Mikic obtained through a FOIL request, noted that the planned screening “showed large gaps between the trees making the solar arrays highly visible even after five years of growth.” SHPO said Hecate needed to develop a “meaningful” mitigation plan, and to do so it should reach out “to a variety of (local) history-based organizations.”

It’s been 18 months since SHPO’s letter, and Hecate still has made no effort to reach out to Copake’s Town Historian or any of the several local history groups.

The Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) proposed that public hearings be scheduled during the week January 19, 2026. Monday, January 19 is a national holiday, Dr. Martin Luther King Day, and we are concerned that people with school-age children may be away for the holiday and unable to attend. We asked the ALJ to schedule the hearings for the following week, and Hecate did not object. However, the ALJ replied that the hearings need to happen during the holiday week so as to not interfere with the schedules of other cases. So, there will be four in-person hearings at Copake Town Hall on Wednesday, January 21 and Thursday, January 22, 2026 – two on each day, at 2pm and 6pm. For those who cannot attend in person, ORES will conduct virtual public comment hearings on Tuesday, January 27, times to be determined.

Whether supporting the Shepherd’s Run proposal or opposing it, people should make every effort to attend and make your feelings and thoughts known.

Richard Wolf
Supervisor