

Solar Update

An ORES (NYS Office of Renewable Energy Siting and Transmission) administrative law judge presided over four in-person public comment hearings regarding Hecate's proposed Shepherd's Run solar facility at Copake Town Hall on January 21 and 22. Two virtual hearings took place on January 27. All of the hearings were very well-attended.

Most speakers, but not all, voiced opposition to Shepherd's Run. Our State Senator Michelle Hinchey and our Assemblymember Didi Barrett spoke out in support of Copake and against the proposed project. The chair of the Columbia County Board of Supervisors and ten town supervisors from around the county spoke in favor of Home Rule and against the proposed project, noting that any decision about land use in Copake should be made by the town, not by New York State.

We are seeking from ORES dismissal of Hecate's application or, at a minimum, party status. Our attorney has filed a 76-page Issues Statement and my 23-page Affirmation explaining that Copake needs party status to be able to present evidence and testimony before a judge concerning important, unresolved issues.

ORES never has granted party status to a town targeted for a utility-scale solar factory, but the Shepherd's Run case already has proven to be unique. ORES never before had dismissed a developer's siting application until it threw out Hecate's original 60-megawatt proposal in January 2025. So we continue to believe that anything is possible!

Party status has also been sought by Sensible Solar for Rural New York, Craryville Farms LLC (which owns the 60-acre parcel adjacent to the southern end of the proposed site), and the Birch Hill Road Neighbors Association.

Now we wait. Decisions on party status are due from ORES on February 18.

Richard Wolf
Supervisor