

Solar Update

There has been no change in the status of Hecate Energy's application before the New York State Office of Renewable Energy Siting and Energy Transmission (ORES) for a siting permit to construct a 42-megawatt utility-scale solar factory, which it calls "Shepherd's Run."

Pending before an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) since mid-April is the town's request to be granted party status in the matter, which would enable us to present evidence at an adjudicatory hearing about important unresolved issues, including flood protection and preservation of wetlands. We would demonstrate why the proposed facility site is inappropriate and why Hecate's application should be rejected. As I've reported before, no "host community" has ever been granted party status by ORES. We deserve to be the first.

Last week, in a hearing conducted by the Commissioner of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, our U.S. Representative Josh Riley spoke out against Hecate for sourcing its solar panels from China, claiming that slave labor was used to manufacture them. He argued that beautiful, upstate New York farmland should not be covered with panels, and that they should go on brownfields and rooftops. The Agriculture Secretary said she would work with Representative Riley to defeat Shepherd's Run. Then, a few days later, EPA Secretary Lee Zeldin came out against Shepherd's Run as well.

Two days ago, the ALJ filed in the case record her emails with Hecate regarding wetlands. These were written in February, and we don't know why they've just been filed. We may find out any day now.

Richard Wolf
Supervisor