



## Board on Electric Generation Siting and the Environment

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### **Siting Board Approves Cayuga County Solar Farm**

**200 MW Project Advances New York State's Aggressive Clean Energy and Climate Goals for 70 Percent of Electricity to Come from Renewable Energy Sources by 2030**

**Project Will Produce Enough Electricity for More Than 32,000 Average-Sized Homes Annually**

**Project Will Create 225 Manufacturing, Supply and Construction Jobs**

**18th Large-Scale Renewable Energy Project Approved by Siting Board  
Since 2018 Will Have 20MW of Battery Storage**

**ALBANY** — The New York State Board on Electric Generation Siting and the Environment (Siting Board) today granted approval to Garnet Energy Center, LLC to build and operate a 200-megawatt (MW) solar farm in the Town of Conquest, Cayuga County, with 20 MWs of battery storage capacity, one of the largest approved to date. The Siting Board's decision follows a detailed review and robust public participation process to ensure that the solar farm meets or exceeds all siting requirements.

"The Garnet Energy solar farm and other renewable energy projects built or currently under development are vital to meet the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act's aggressive carbon reduction and clean energy targets to combat climate change," **said Siting Board Chair Rory M. Christian.** "This solar farm will benefit all New Yorkers by reducing our reliance on fossil fuels, boosting clean-energy investment, creating clean-energy jobs, and improving our environment."

The project will create new jobs, provide long-term revenue and economic development to Cayuga County and the Town of Conquest. According to estimates provided from the developer, the project will provide a positive economic impact, including more than 225 jobs during construction and three to four full-time positions during facility operations. According to the developer, the largest expenditure during the construction phase of the project will be \$25.6 million spent on local employment.

In addition, there will be opportunities for local businesses to supply materials to support the construction of the project, and service-industry businesses such as hotels, restaurants and entertainment venues will benefit from an increase in worker activity throughout construction.

The project will create employment opportunities for those in the construction trades, including equipment operators, truck drivers, laborers, and electricians.

The operation of the facility will result in a reduction of approximately 72,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> from the New York State power sector in 2023 — the equivalent of taking 15,000 cars off the road. The facility will also result in reductions of SO<sub>x</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub>. The project is estimated to cost around \$215 million, according to industry reports.

The project area is about 2,289 vacant acres, and the project footprint is about 900 acres. The solar farm is expected to begin commercial operation in 2023. Through land agreements, the project developer says it supports the agricultural economy by infusing revenue into family farms and diversifying their income.

According to industry estimates, the 200-MW solar farm will produce enough electricity for more than 32,000 average-sized homes annually. Garnet is a subsidiary of NextEra Energy Resources, LLC, one of the world's largest generators of wind and solar energy, with generating facilities across the U.S. and in Canada.

After reviewing and modifying some of the agreed-upon certificate conditions submitted by the settlement parties, the Siting Board determined that the solar farm will be consistent with the energy policies and long-range planning objectives and strategies contained in the most recent State Energy Plan. Based on this, and other factors, the Siting Board determined that the project will be a beneficial addition to the electric generation capacity of the State and will also serve the goals of improving fuel diversity, grid reliability, and modernization of grid infrastructure.

Garnet's formal application to the Siting Board was deemed compliant November 1, 2021. The 11 parties to the proceeding included several State agencies, the local municipality, and labor and community groups. The record includes more than 50 public comments and statements. The Siting Board held on-the-record virtual public statement hearings and compiled an evidentiary record containing expert and factual testimony. Garnet is the eighteenth renewable energy project approved by the Siting Board since 2018.

The project will consist of commercial-scale solar arrays, access roads, buried electric collection lines, a collection substation, and electrical interconnection facilities. Additional facilities would include a 345-kV switchyard which will be transferred to New York Power Authority to own, maintain, and operate. The project will be located on land leased from owners of private property. The project will include a 20 MW energy storage system which will charge exclusively off the solar array.

Although there is no agreement yet in place with the local government, Garnet estimates that annual payments in lieu of taxes will be \$2.67 million in 2023 and \$1.3 million in 2024. Total payments over a 20-year period are estimated to be \$33 million, according to the developer. The Cato-Meridian Central School District is expected to receive the largest payments, with a 20-year total of \$13 million in PILOT payments. Cayuga County is expected to receive a total of \$9.2 million in PILOT payment, with the Town of Conquest receiving \$6.2 million in PILOT and other payments over the 20-year period. The Port Byron Central School District and the Weedsport Central School District are projected to receive \$2.1 million and \$2.4 million, respectively, over the 20-year period.

## **New York State's Nation-Leading Climate Plan**

New York State's nation-leading climate agenda is the most aggressive climate and clean energy initiative in the nation, calling for an orderly and just transition to clean energy that creates jobs and continues fostering a green economy as New York State recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Enshrined into law through the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, New York is on a path to achieve its mandated goal of a zero-emission electricity sector by 2040, including 70 percent renewable energy generation by 2030, and to reach economy wide carbon neutrality. It builds on New York's unprecedented investments to ramp-up clean energy including over \$35 billion in 120 large-scale renewable and transmission projects across the state, \$6.8 billion to reduce buildings emissions, \$1.8 billion to scale up solar, more than \$1 billion for clean transportation initiatives, and over \$1.6 billion in NY Green Bank commitments. Combined, these investments are supporting nearly 158,000 jobs in New York's clean energy sector in 2020, a 2,100 percent growth in the distributed solar sector since 2011 and a commitment to develop 9,000 megawatts of offshore wind by 2035. Under the Climate Act, New York will build on this progress and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 85 percent from 1990 levels by 2050, while ensuring that at least 35 percent with a goal of 40 percent of the benefits of clean energy investments are directed to disadvantaged communities, and advance progress towards the state's 2025 energy efficiency target of reducing on-site energy consumption by 185 trillion BTUs of end-use energy savings.

Today's decision may be obtained by going to the Documents section of the Commission's Web site at [www.dps.ny.gov](http://www.dps.ny.gov) and entering Case Number 20-F-0043 in the input box labeled "Search for Case/Matter Number". Many libraries offer free Internet access. Commission documents may also be obtained from the Commission's Files Office, 14th floor, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223 (518-474-2500). If you have difficulty understanding English, please call us at 1-800-342-3377 for free language assistance services regarding this press release.