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Basil Seggos

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Howard A. Zucker, M.D., J.D.
Members

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Contact:

James Denn | James.Denn@dps.ny.gov | (518) 474-7080

www.dps.ny.gov/SitingBoard

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Siting Board Approves Montgomery County Solar Farm

90 MW Clean Energy Project Will Produce Enough Clean Electricity for 18,000 Average-Sized Homes Annually

Project to Create Nearly 250 Construction Jobs Paying \$9.8 Million in Wages

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

ALBANY — The New York State Board on Electric Generation Siting and the Environment (Siting Board) today granted approval to High River Energy Center, LLC (High River) to build and operate a 90 megawatt (MW) solar farm in the Town of Florida, Montgomery County. 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. This solar farm and other renewable energy projects currently under development — as announced in Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's 2021 State of the State address — are vital to meet the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act's aggressive carbon reduction and clean energy targets to combat climate change.

"With our approval of this Montgomery County solar farm, we are helping deliver on Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's nation-leading strategy for carbon reduction and a clean-energy economy," **said Siting Board Chair John B. Howard**. "The High River solar farm will benefit all New Yorkers by reducing our reliance on fossil fuels, while boosting clean-energy investment, clean-energy jobs, and improving our environment."

According to the developer, the project is expected to create nearly 250 construction jobs that will pay \$9.8 million in wages. Local construction employment will primarily benefit those in the construction trades, including equipment operators, truck drivers, laborers, and electricians.

The solar farm will result in annual payments to local landowners through lease and easement agreements. The facility will be located on approximately 1,425 acres of privately leased or purchased land. The solar farm will result in annual payments to local landowners in association with the lease and easement agreements.

After reviewing the agreed-upon certificate conditions submitted by most of the parties, the Siting Board examiners 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

based on its consideration of other relevant social, economic 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. High River's formal application to the Siting Board was deemed compliant on March 13, 2020. The 22 parties to the proceeding included the municipality, a citizens group, and a labor group. The record includes nearly 50 public comments. The Siting Board held on-the-record virtual public statement hearings and conducted evidentiary hearings at which expert and factual testimony was taken.

The developer said local governments will also receive \$11.4 million in payments in lieu of taxes (PILOTs) and other funding over 20 years. The developer paid \$121,500 in intervenor funds to enable municipal and community groups to fully participate in the review of the project.

Today's decision demonstrates how New York is working to achieve Governor Cuomo'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 achieving its mandated goal of a zero-emissions electricity sector by 2040, including 70 percent renewable energy generation by 2030, and to reach economy-wide carbon neutrality. The transmission upgrade project also builds on New York's unprecedented ramp-up of clean energy including over \$4 billion invested in 91 large-scale renewable projects across the state, the creation of more than 150,000 jobs in New York's clean energy sector, a commitment to develop 9,000 megawatts of offshore wind by 2035, and 1,800 percent growth in the distributed solar sector since 2011. Under Governor Cuomo's leadership, 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 to disadvantaged communities and advancing progress towards the state's 2025 energy efficiency target of reducing on-site energy consumption by 185 trillion BTUs in end-use savings.

Today's decision may be obtained by going to the Documents section of the Department of Public Service's website at www.dps.ny.gov and entering Case Number 17-F-0597 in the input box labeled "Search for Case/Matter Number." Siting Board 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 1-800-342-3377 for free language assistance services regarding this press release.