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Siting Board Approves Greene County Solar Farm

100 MW Clean Energy Project Will Produce Enough Clean Electricity for 20,000 Average-Sized Homes Annually

Project Will Potentially Create Nearly 490 Manufacturing, Supply and Construction Jobs Paying \$41.3 Million in Wages

Solar Farm to Provide Up to \$68 Million Statewide and \$21 Million Countywide in Estimated Economic Benefits During Construction

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 Flint Mine Solar, LLC (Flint Mine) to build and operate a 100 megawatt (MW) solar farm in the Towns of Coxsackie and Athens, Greene County. The Siting Board's decision follows a detailed review and robust public participation process to ensure that the wind 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 today's decision, we are helping deliver on New York's strategy for carbon reduction and a clean-energy economy," **said Siting Board Chair John B. Howard.** "The Flint Mine 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."

According to the developer, the project could potentially create nearly 490 manufacturing, supply and construction jobs that will pay \$41.3 million in wages, as well as create additional opportunities for local construction and construction supply vendors. The solar farm will result in annual payments to local landowners in association with the lease and easement agreements. The facility will be located on approximately 1,638 acres of privately leased or purchased land. The solar panels will be connected to the electric grid via infrastructure owned by National Grid.

After reviewing the agreed-upon certificate conditions submitted by most of the 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 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.

Flint Mine's formal application to the Siting Board was deemed compliant on August 12, 2020. The 33 parties to the proceeding included several state agencies, the municipalities, citizen groups, and labor groups. The record includes more than 180 public comments. The Siting Board held on-the-record virtual public statement hearings and compiled an evidentiary record containing expert and factual testimony.

By way of both direct and indirect benefits, prior to construction the developer will purchase as much as 90 percent of the land needed for the project directly from current landowners, resulting in a direct infusion of almost \$15 million into the local economy. This is a significant direct benefit to the participating landowners. The lands in the project area are ill-suited to agriculture and the infrastructure to support family farms no longer exists in the area. The project will allow participating landowners to realize significant value from their land resources and this, in turn, will accrue to the local taxing jurisdictions and local businesses in Coxsackie and Athens.

Other significant project benefits will include the direct and indirect creation of jobs in construction and construction-related services, related supply chain jobs, jobs associated with induced impacts, and annual revenues for local economies during construction. In addition, local governments will receive significant payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) over 25 years that will be distributed to the Towns of Athens and Coxsackie, Greene County, the Coxsackie-Athens Central School District, the West Athens-Limestone Fire Company and Coxsackie Hose Company #3, and the Coxsackie and Athens Libraries. For example, payments of special district taxes to fire and library districts are estimated to total an additional \$192,257 and \$243,585 annually, respectively.

Moreover, the developer will purchase and conserve the 62.5-acre Flint Mine Hill parcel and create a nearly 300-acre grassland conservation area improved with a recreational walking trail near Flint Mine Road. These significant open space conservation benefits are in addition to the direct financial benefits to participating landowners. Based on this record, the construction and operation of the project is in the public interest. It is consistent with State policies and law and will provide significant benefits to the host communities and the surrounding region and the State.

The developer estimated construction of the solar farm, expected to take approximately 18 months, would provide \$68 million in overall economic output, including \$21 million countywide.

Today's action demonstrates how New York is working to achieve Governor Cuomo's nation-leading climate agenda, 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 \$21 billion in 91 large-scale renewable 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 \$1.2 billion in NY Green Bank commitments. Combined, these investments are supporting more than 150,000 jobs in New York's clean energy sector in 2019, 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 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 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 Department of Public Service's website at www.dps.ny.gov and entering Case Number 18-F-0087 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.