


OPINION

Why the Town of Copake Opposes Shepherd's Run

Jeanne Mettler 11:00 AM EDT on Oct 4, 2021



Credibility:  On the Ground

To the Editor:

In her comprehensive discussion of the solar debate in Copake, [“The Backyard Battle for New York’s Climate Future,”](#) writer Susan Arterian engages in the type of rigorous, objective examination of the issues which the State of New York should also pursue.

On the same day that Ms. Arterian’s piece was published, we also learned that the Siting Board approved a 50 megawatt solar “farm” in the Town of Coxsackie in Greene County. The applicant in the matter was Hecate Energy, the same corporation which seeks to build in Copake. [The press release by New York State was jubilant](#), claiming that the solar farm will create 200 manufacturing, supply, and construction jobs, and “will produce enough electricity for 13,000 average-sized homes annually.”

[When quoted in the Daily Freeman](#), Town of Coxsackie Supervisor Rick Hanse was far less upbeat about the Board’s decision. “It’s an ambitious program of getting renewable energy by 2030, but they’re a bit of a steamroller of our rural communities in how they do it,” he said.



A local citizen group which had opposed the Cocksackie project, Saving Greene, published its final comments in response to the Siting Board's decision. In somber tones, they said that they were recording their comments “as a kind of time capsule that others may look at one day and judge whether we were right or wrong to oppose this facility.”

Many of Saving Greene's concerns are Copake's, with regards to the Shepherd's Run proposal by Hecate. The industrial project would damage prime farmland and “there is a ripple effect among local economies in which farming becomes increasingly expensive and difficult,” as Saving Greene writes. Once constructed, the project will offer a minimum number of jobs. It destroys open space and habitat.



Credit: Leonard Jewler

Both the supervisor and Saving Greene looked back, wondering if they ever had a shot against Hecate. Again from the *Daily Freeman*: “The fix is in, I would even say that,” Hanse said. “What I said to my Town Board...was it was a forgone conclusion.”

Last month, we drove back from Cape Cod and remarked at the number of solar arrays along the Massachusetts Turnpike and Route 495. I have long recommended that New York State build solar arrays on the median of the Thruway from the Yonkers to the Canadian border. But the supporters of Hecate would say that since there is no substation along the Thruway, it would be too expensive.

Make no mistake: New York taxpayers are paying incentives which subsidize developers like Hecate. What a strange world we live in, where activists who have long railed against corporate greed are worried about Hecate's bottom line.

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Jeanne Mettler

Jeanne Mettler is the supervisor for the Town of Copake.

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