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Didi Barrett

Assemblymember 106th District
Columbia County
Dutchess County

December 4, 2023

Houtan Moaveni, Executive Director
NYS Office of Renewable Energy Siting
Empire State Plaza
240 State Street
P-1 South, J Dock
Albany, NY 12242

Re: Matter #21-02553, Application of Hecate Energy Columbia County 1, LLC

Dear Mr. Moaveni,

I write today to convey my serious concerns, and those of many of my constituents including the Town of Copake leadership, about the siting and size of the 60 MW Shepherd's Run solar project proposed by Hecate Energy LLC in Copake, NY, the application of which has been deemed completed and was issued a draft permit on October 24, 2023.

The current 267 acre proposed footprint would result in the clear-cutting of 40 acres of woodlands; disrupt more than 200 acres of valuable farmland; impact rural viewsheds; threaten historic properties; risk the health and safety of residents of the Towns of Taghkanic, Hillsdale, Claverack, Copake, and the City of Hudson who receive their drinking water from the Taghkanic Creek; intrude on 21 wetlands and 9 protected streams; and overlap with the FEMA-mapped 100-year flood zone. These serious threats to our farmland, natural resources, and surrounding communities have never been addressed by Hecate, the developer.

It has been my great privilege to represent the beautiful 106th Assembly District for more than a decade. This historic Hudson Valley district, which includes the Town of Copake, was known as the breadbasket of the young nation at the time of the American Revolution. It is blessed with world class soils, abundant water and small and mid-sized family farms that have fed New Yorkers for centuries. Beginning in 1970 the pressure to "get big or get out" led to the closing of dozens of local dairy farms and the businesses that supported them, creating decades of economic distress. It is only recently that the local economy has begun to turn the corner with the popularity of farm-to-table agriculture, the expansion of the Harlem Valley Rail Trail and the growth of the local craft beverage industry.

My concerns about the size and siting of Shepherd's Run are not new. As you may recall, we first invited you, other agency representatives, and members of the Department of Public Service Siting Board for a driving tour of the proposed site on May 21, 2021. Indeed, since the

project was first announced in February 2020, I personally have participated in dozens of stakeholder meetings, town halls and discussions with individual constituents including immediate neighbors of the proposed site; written more than a dozen letters to state leaders and relevant stakeholders, and participated in many visits to the proposed location including a recent in-person tour of the site with ORES staff on August 31, 2023.

It has been my experience that from the outset, Hecate has not acted in good faith, communicated, or addressed the concerns of the Town leadership and community as a whole. As an example, my office and I actively participated in the Craryville Gateway Working Group, representing stakeholders from both sides of this issue, to make recommendations that the Town of Copake and community at-large could support. Hecate failed to respond to outreach from this thoughtful group and incorporated very few recommendations into the final application.

In 2019, I was proud to vote for the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA), which in its very name recognizes the importance of striking the necessary balance between achieving our nation-leading climate goals and protecting communities by ensuring them a seat at the table. As Governor Kathy Hochul recently stated, “It is incumbent on renewable energy developers to cultivate and maintain strong ties to their host communities throughout the planning, siting, and operation of all large-scale projects.”

I urge you to fully consider the issues raised in this letter and throughout this process and the impact that this proposed project will have on our community, our farmland, and the local economy. I look forward to continuing to engage in discussions with you and your office. Please don’t hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Didi Barrett". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

Didi Barrett
Member of Assembly, 106th District

cc: Joseph Foskett, Legislative and External Affairs Manager, NYS Office of
Renewable Energy Siting
John O’Leary, Deputy Secretary for Energy & Environment, NYS Executive Chamber