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Mr. Houtan Moaveni
Executive Director
New York State Office of Renewable Energy Siting
Albany, NY 12242

November 9, 2023

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

Dear Mr. Moaveni,

I am writing to address my deep concerns about the proposed location for a 60-megawatt solar facility by Hecate Energy LLC in the Town of Copake, situated within my Senate District in Columbia County. The urgency for more renewable energy is indisputable, but it is equally vital to select ecologically sound locations for these projects. The proposed siting of the Shepherd's Run facility falls short of meeting this requirement due to the fact that it is sited directly on significant agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands. I urge the Office of Renewable Energy Siting (ORES) to recognize the elements at stake here in Copake and adhere to its own standards in mitigating adverse environmental and agricultural impacts in its own siting process by finding a more suitable location for the Shephard's Run project.

As it stands, the proposed site for Hecate Energy's project would result in 216 acres of valuable New York farmland rendered *unusable*, the clear-cutting of 40 acres of woodlands, intrusion into Class 1 wetlands, and a risk to the drinking water of the City of Hudson residents. Situated on 21 wetlands and 9 protected streams, the project also occupies a FEMA-mapped 100-year flood zone, lacking a clear mitigation plan for impending flood damage. These outcomes undoubtedly constitute adverse impacts.

Our food and water supplies, along with our protected streams, wetlands, forests, and natural habitats, are in danger due to this suggested location — a location that goes against the very laws guiding ORES' siting decisions in New York State, specifically N.Y. Exec. Law § 94-C 3 (b), emphasizing the need to *“avoid, minimize or mitigate potential adverse environmental impacts from the siting, design, construction, and operation of a major renewable energy facility.”*

New York must lead the way forward with renewable energy. We must create the clean energy security we need to protect our communities while giving ourselves a fighting chance to combat the increasingly dire impacts of the Climate Crisis. However, we must do this without subsequently causing a food crisis, a water crisis, or a conservation crisis. These are the very elements at risk here in Copake, and it is why I emphasize once again the need for your office to work with Hecate and local stakeholders to identify a safer, more suitable location for the Shephard's run project.

My office is always available should you wish to engage in further discussions on this matter. I look forward to working together for the well-being of Columbia County and our state. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this important matter.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Hinchey". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Michelle Hinchey
New York State Senator, District 41