



Didi Barrett

Assemblymember 106th District
Columbia County
Dutchess County

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

CHAIR
Energy

COMMITTEES
Agriculture
Environmental Conservation
Tourism, Parks, Arts and
Sports Development

February 5, 2025

Hon. Kathy Hochul
Governor
State of New York
Executive Chamber
Albany, NY 12248

Re: Matter #24-00103, Application of Hecate Energy Columbia County 1, LLC

Dear Governor Hochul,

I write today to convey my serious concerns and those of many of my constituents, including the Town of Copake leadership, about the siting of the 42 MW Shepherd's Run solar project proposed by Hecate Energy LLC in Copake, NY. Since this project was first proposed by Hecate Energy in 2019, my office has worked closely with local officials and residents to relay their questions and concerns about its siting and scale, and the impact it would have on the regional economy. In fact, this is my third letter to you since you became our Governor in 2021 — a testament to the community's overwhelming concern about the Shepherd's Run Solar Project.

After significant public input and several incomplete permit applications, the Office of Renewable Energy Siting (ORES) made the unprecedented decision last year to reject Hecate Energy's application. This decision was a relief to many Copake residents and provided an opportunity to reset the conversation and allow for stakeholders to work together in good faith to develop a project consistent with the scale of the community.

Instead, Hecate has re-applied with a similar proposal that simply removes a 60-acre parcel of land that has since been purchased and is no longer in the scope of the project — a transaction that in part led to Hecate's last application being rejected — even reusing outdated information by displaying posters that included the now eliminated 60 acres of land at their public meetings last year.

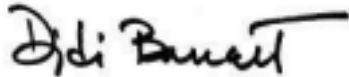
It has been my experience that from the outset, Hecate has failed to act in good faith, neither communicated with or addressed the concerns of the Town leadership and community as a whole. As an example, the newest application still does not reflect the recommendations of the community-wide Craryville Gateway Working Group, which I served on for several years. The application also fails to take into consideration the Department of Environmental Conservation's newly enacted wetland regulations. These regulations expand

the DEC's authority to regulate wetlands of any size that have an 'unusual importance,' and extend their regulation to include more of the adjacent area around a wetland. Furthermore, the developer of this 42 megawatt project has also requested to override a staggering 16 local laws, more than any other application before ORES.

When we passed the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) in 2019, we committed to putting New York at the forefront of combating climate change while at the same time protecting communities in every corner of the state. Since then, we have seen first-hand the challenges associated with striking the necessary balance between these two priorities. In your 2023 veto message of A.7764/S.6218-A, you rightfully summarized this by saying "*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 share your commitment to promoting renewable energy development while at the same time protecting our constituents from bad actors.

I urge you to fully consider the concerns raised in this letter and throughout this process. 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 written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Didi Barrett
Member of Assembly, 106th District