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NO GOOD NEWS IN REVISED SHEPHERD’S RUN APPLICATION; STATE FUNDING AWARD CRITICIZED

Hecate’s latest submission to the NY Office of Renewable Energy Siting (ORES) regarding its controversial Shepherd’s Run solar project, dated May 20, 2025, fails to address very serious problems with the proposed Copake facility, says Sensible Solar for Rural New York (SSRNY). A New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) funding award announced the following day contradicts the agency’s own siting standards, according to State Senator Michelle Hinchey.

“There is no good news in the revised permit application,” states Sara Traberman of SSRNY. “Solar panels will be put in the Taghkanic Creek floodplain. Hudson’s drinking water supply, which comes 100 percent from Taghkanic Creek, remains at risk. And should there be a brush fire, the 1400 students at the adjacent Taconic Hills Central Schools remain at risk of smoke inhalation and spreading fire with no evacuation plan,” Traberman says.

Hecate filed a revised permit application on May 20, 2025. Shepherd’s Run was awarded financing by the NYSERDA the next day. State Senator Michelle Hinchey strongly criticized the NYSERDA award in a statement Friday. “The facts haven’t changed: Shepherd’s Run would industrialize prime farmland, cut into wetlands, and disrupt wildlife habitat, directly contradicting the siting standards NYSERDA claims to

uphold. If this is what NYSERDA considers fundable, then the agency's scoring and review process is broken and needs to be fixed. "

The 215-acre 42 MW Shepherd's Run project is making a second attempt at getting a permit from ORES. Hecate's first permit application was rejected in February 2024 after Hecate lost control of part of the site. Hecate resubmitted in December, 2024, and filed requested revised documents last week. The new documents reveal previously undisclosed negative impacts including that the project will generate 1500 tons of landfill waste and that a road will be built across a protected stream.

ORES has 60 days to decide whether Hecate's latest revision continues to be Incomplete, or is Complete and ready to proceed to permitting.

SSRNY has filed comments with ORES stating that the application does not contain critical information required by ORES regulations.

"There is no way ORES should consider this permit application complete and ready to move to the next stage of the process," states Traberman. "Neither NYSERDA nor ORES have given this project the scrutiny required under their own regulations. The lack of a fire evacuation plan for the Taconic Schools, the lack of protection for the watershed for Hudson's drinking water, the absence of up to date studies on endangered bird species previously found at the site, all must be addressed," states Traberman.

"We absolutely need more renewable energy. We have only begun to exploit the opportunities for solar on rooftops, shopping malls and brownfields. The Shepherd's Run project will make a minuscule contribution to the New York's renewable energy goals. The more details we learn about Shepherd's Run, the more we feel that this project is wrong for Copake, for Columbia County and for New York State," says Traberman.

For more information on Sensible Solar for Rural New York and the Shepherd's Run solar project see sensiblesolarny.org.

