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**NYS DEEMS SHEPHERD’S RUN APPLICATION ‘COMPLETE’
WITHOUT AN EVACUATION PLAN FOR TACONIC SCHOOLS;
SSRNY URGES PERMIT DENIAL**

Sensible Solar for Rural New York (SSRNY) said today that the State’s “Application Complete” notice to Hecate regarding its controversial Shepherd’s Run solar project shows “utter disregard” for the safety of the 1400 students who attend the Taconic Hills Central Schools in Copake, NY.

The notice, issued Sept 19, 2025 by the NYS Department of Public Service’s Office of Renewable Energy Siting (ORES), starts the clock ticking towards issuance of a Draft Permit for the 200-acre 42 megawatt solar project. ORES has 60 days to issue a Draft Permit, or to issue a notice of denial of the application.

ORES ‘Application Complete’ notification was issued despite the filing of court cases last month by two lenders to Hecate which indicate Hecate is in default on two separate loans. Further, the two lenders dispute who is entitled to the collateral on the loans.

“We are dismayed that ORES has deemed the Shepherd’s Run application complete, without requiring an evacuation plan for the Taconic Schools in the event of fire,” states Sara Traberman of SSRNY. “We urge ORES to issue a permit denial, rather than a Draft Permit, in the next 60 days.”

The Shepherd's Run project includes a large area of solar panels directly adjacent to the Taconic Schools. Hecate's application states that any fire should simply be allowed to burn itself out. Smoke from such a fire could easily envelop the school. ORES regulations state that there should be an evacuation plan if there is a fire hazard to the surrounding community, but no such plan was required of Hecate.

"ORES and the New York Department of Public Service have turned a blind eye to the welfare of the children, and a deaf ear to the more than 700 public comments filed in opposition to the project since inception. The determination that Hecate's application is complete without an evacuation plan in the event of fire shows utter disregard for the safety of the students and people who live nearby" Traberman states. "ORES ignored concerns not just of citizens but of the Copake Town Board, and in engineers reports filed on behalf of landowners which highlighted areas where the application was not correct or complete," Traberman adds.

The NYS completeness notification comes as controversy swirls around Hecate's financial situation. One court filing regarding a default on a loan alleged that the company was "insolvent."

"We are surprised that the NYS Department of Public Service, which oversees ORES, is allowing this project to move forward apparently without taking into account the questions about Hecate's financial situation," states Traberman. "It is essential that any solar project given a permit in New York State be on a financially secure footing, to insure that all permit conditions can be met and that the project will not be abandoned mid-construction," Traberman adds.

SSRNY continues to oppose the Shepherd's Run Project on the grounds that it will be sited on prime agricultural land, is located within the watershed that supplies 100 percent of the drinking water for the City of Hudson, will disturb NYS protected wetlands, and adversely affects numerous cultural resources, in addition to the threat to the Taconic Schools.

Attachments:

ORES Application Complete Letter

NEC court filing

LCN court filing

