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**MICHELLE HINCHEY**  
Senator, 41<sup>ST</sup> District

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON CANNABIS

January 15, 2026

Zeryai Hagos, Executive Director  
New York State Office of Renewable Energy Siting (ORES)  
Department of Public Service  
1220 Washington Avenue  
Albany, NY 12226

RE: Matter Number 24-03041 – Application of Hecate Energy Columbia County 1, LLC

Dear Mr. Hagos,

As the State Senator representing Columbia County, I have consistently raised serious objections to Hecate Energy's proposed location for the Shepherd's Run Solar Facility in the Town of Copake. Those concerns remain unresolved, and I again urge the Office of Renewable Energy Siting and Electric Transmission (ORES) to reject Hecate's latest application.

This developer has repeatedly demonstrated an inability to engage honestly, act in good faith, and meet basic environmental and agricultural protections expected in the State of New York. That pattern of conduct has not changed with this application.

Furthermore, my office has been in direct conversation with the New York Power Authority (NYPA), and we have a firm commitment from the Authority that it is not involved in this project. As NYPA told my office directly:

*“The New York Power Authority is not a development partner on Shepherd's Run Solar Farm and neither owns, nor has any agreement to purchase the project. In addition, as we emphasized during the meeting, NYPA will not be participating in the Shepherd's Run project and that will be reflected in new biennial Renewables Strategic Plan later this year.”*

That confirmation reinforces what my office and local residents have been saying all along: this specific proposal, as sited and designed, is not viable for Columbia County or for New York State. New York's clean energy goals are too imperative, and at this point, continuing to recycle the same failed application is a waste of public time and state resources. It is time to move on and focus our attention on renewable energy projects that are responsibly sited and are in a position to actually move forward.

New York must lead by example and with integrity by working with developers who take legitimate community concerns seriously. Hecate has time and again done the opposite, dismissing well-founded objections and treating local input as an obstacle to be overridden rather than a responsibility owed to the community in which it seeks to operate.

New York urgently needs to expand renewable energy, but that vital progress cannot come at the cost of sacrificing prime farmland, threatening drinking water sources, or damaging fragile ecosystems. The proposed project is sited within the Taghkanic Creek Watershed, which supplies drinking water to nearby communities, including the City of Hudson. These impacts are clear, foreseeable, and unacceptable. This sweeping preemption undermines local planning and sets a troubling precedent for rural and agricultural communities across New York State, which all too often bear a disproportionate share of large-scale development impacts without commensurate local benefit.

Despite these serious concerns, Hecate has failed to provide meaningful updates or address longstanding deficiencies. From the perspective of my office and that of the local community, this application process has been marked by persistent bad faith.

Every community in the State of New York, including Columbia County, deserves a clean energy future that's responsibly planned, environmentally sound, and grounded in genuine partnership. The PSC should be prioritizing obvious areas for solar development — parking lots, warehouses, state facilities, and state land, incorporating renewables into every state project, not wasting its resources and the resources of state legislative offices and municipal governments on previously denied projects. If the state is serious about meeting the goals of the CLCPA, change is drastically needed in this process, so we are not running on a hamster wheel of projects already deemed unfit just to satisfy private equity-owned developers with no care for our state or our communities. Approval of this draft permit would fail to meet that standard. For these reasons, ORES should deny Hecate's application once and for all.

Respectfully Submitted,

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

NYS Senator Michelle Hinchey