

HECATE CIDER SOLAR FARM PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE Q&A

Summary of Open Forums Held March 24, 2021, 1-3 PM and 5-7 PM

Project Siting, Construction, and Operation

Q: Why is the Project being sited in New York? Why not in a sunny state, like Arizona or Nevada?

The Cider Solar Farm is proposed to be sited in New York for a number of reasons. We need to protect local environmental quality and combat global climate change. New York State, through the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, has set ambitious and comprehensive goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the state by 2030. Part of the State's strategy is to have 70 percent of its energy consumption from renewable generation by 2030. Hecate chose the specific Project location in Genesee County due to its proximity to the NYPA powerline for interconnection, availability of relatively flat, open land, and local interest.

As a result of technology advancements and lower panel costs, less sunny areas (Northeast) have become financially viable to produce solar energy. Modern solar panels are designed to absorb not only direct sunlight, but also diffuse radiation (photons) emitted under cloudy conditions. Panels also are mounted on steel trackers, which follow the sun from an east to west direction.

Q: Where will the solar equipment be manufactured? Will Hecate use local supply and labor resources?

Hecate is in consultation with several solar equipment manufacturers and has not yet made a final selection. While very few panel manufacturers operate within the United States, Hecate is looking to contract as much in-State supply for other Project components as is available. Hecate's website includes additional resources on how local supply contractors can contact Hecate for partnership opportunities: <https://www.hecateenergy.com/partner/>

Hecate's construction contractor will seek to utilize local labor sources for construction jobs associated with the Project. It is anticipated that the local economy will benefit from the creation of jobs and associated local spending. Hecate is currently using local consultants for surveys and other field-based work. In addition, most operations staff likely will be pooled from local labor sources.

Q: How long will Project construction last?

Project construction is anticipated to commence 3rd quarter 2022 and would occur over an 18-month to two-year period, ending in 2024. Once construction begins, it is planned for the presence of construction crews gradually increase, with the bulk of the construction work occurring over a 12-month period. Construction activities over the final three to six months will then gradually decrease. During construction, crews will move from section to section by installing posts, followed by panels, wiring, and other Project equipment. A comprehensive construction management plan will be developed and adhered to over the entire construction phase of the Project. The plan will include a Code of Conduct for construction workers.

Q: Will Hecate operate the Project? Does Hecate own any other solar projects in New York?

Hecate has developed or is in the process of developing multiple 40- to 60-MW solar projects across New York State and has experience in developing projects in the 500-megawatt (MW) scale in California and Texas. Hecate may or may not be involved in the operational phase of the Cider Solar Farm. All permit conditions must be adhered to through the life of the Project regardless of "owner."

Q: Will the Project have storage capabilities?

No, the Cider Solar Farm will not have the capacity to store solar energy. No battery technology is included in this project.

Q: Will a new substation be built?

A new substation would be built directly adjacent to the existing NYPA transmission line in which the Project would interconnect. A typical substation footprint includes approximately five acres of land.

Maintenance

Q: How will the solar panels be maintained? How will crews respond in the event of a fire or other emergency?

Maintenance activities would occur through the life of the Project but are anticipated to be minimal. If no safety concerns are present, crews will typically come out within 24 hours to fix equipment.

Solar panel components are not composed of flammable nor radioactive materials. While extremely unlikely, the primary source of a potential fire could occur at the substation connection of wires by inverters and transformers. Hecate will be providing emergency response training to the local fire departments to respond in the unlikely event of a fire. These trainings also are anticipated to assist in fire department response to individual home solar panels within the community.

Q: How will vegetation in panel areas be maintained during operation? Will there be opportunities for sheep grazing?

The local workforce would be utilized for vegetation maintenance within the Project Site. The use of herbicides will be minimized to the extent possible (most likely to be used sparingly in target areas such as near substation and fence entrances). Hecate also is exploring creative ideas, such as co-agricultural opportunities (e.g., sheep grazing in panel areas) to help maintain vegetation in the panel areas. Hecate welcomes feedback on potential co-agricultural opportunity interest.

Life of Project and Decommissioning

Q: How long will the Project be here? How long do panels last?

The Project, as designed, would have a nameplate capacity of approximately 500 MW with an estimated life of 35 to 40 years. The solar panels selected for this Project run “fuel free” and have a guaranteed performance of 25 to 30 years. Solar panel efficiency typically degrades at a rate of 0.3 to 0.5% per year. After the life of a panel has been exhausted, replacement of panels with newer technology could occur, which could potentially extend the life of the Project. Retired panels can be sold at a discount for reuse (80-90% of original performance) or components recycled and sold for scrap value.

Q: Will the Project footprint increase in the future?

Once an application is submitted, if additional land acquisition is desired, a completely separate permitting process would be completed and a new, unique permit issued. This is a highly unlikely scenario.

Q: Is decommissioning guaranteed? Will panels be abandoned?

Panels will not be abandoned in place. Once operation of the Project concludes, the equipment is required to be decommissioned and removed from site. Decommissioning bond funds will be guaranteed in advance to ensure that proper decommissioning processes are adhered to.

Local Benefits and Considerations

Q: How will the Project benefit the local community? What will the tax revenues be for the local municipalities?

The Project is anticipated to contribute tens of millions of dollars over its life directly to local and regional sources, such as schools, local governments, fire departments, ambulance companies, and libraries. New revenues will be significantly higher than current tax revenue generated by the land on which the Project will be located. In addition, the project benefits local landowners who've agreed to lease their land with decades of reliable income.

Indirect benefits also will include economic benefits by boosting the area's economy, creating full-time equivalent construction jobs, and increased economic stimulus for local businesses.

Hecate looks forward to further discussion with the communities to discuss benefits and balancing the needs of economic benefit with maintaining the character of the community. Once these opportunities are explored, specific tax revenue benefits will be more fully understood. In general, solar projects are taxed at higher rates than wind projects.

Q: Will the local community get to use the energy produced by the Project?

Hecate is exploring programs to provide electricity from the Project directly to local communities through various wholesale agreement options. Through grid modeling, Hecate understands that, as generation capacity is added to a certain region on the energy grid, the congestion of wires helps reduce the power prices, which slightly decreases the cost of power in that region. Local residents potentially could expect to see a reduction in utility payments of up to \$150 per year.

Q: Will the Project impact property values? What about property insurance rates?

Research on solar projects have not been shown to impact property values nor homeowners insurance rates.¹

Q: Is Hecate communicating with local municipalities? What mechanisms are available in the permit application process for public opposition of a project?

Hecate has been working closely with the Towns of Elba and Oakfield over the past year, and will continue to do so, regarding Project conformance with local requirements. Hecate values its open line of dialogue with local communities to address community concerns. A summary of regular communications with the towns will be provided as part of Hecate's community engagement plan, which will be made available to the public at the time of permit application filing.

Hecate has held two previous virtual public open houses in October 2020 and December 2020 to solicit public feedback on the Project. Post cards were sent to all landowners within one mile of the Project prior to the public meetings. Flyers were posted at select common areas within Elba and Oakfield. Hecate has weekly Zoom meetings on Wednesdays to provide opportunities for the public to ask questions about

¹ Kirkland, Richard C. Grandy Solar Impact Study. Kirkland Appraisals, 25 Feb. 2016, kirklandappraisals.com
Lines, Andrew. "Property Impact Study: Solar Farms in Illinois." Mcleancounty.gov, Nexia International, 7 Aug. 2018.
McGarr, Patricia. Property Value Impact Study. Cohn Reznick LLP Valuation Advisory Services, 2 May 2018

the Project. More detail regarding these meetings as well as summaries of the virtual public open houses can be found at www.cidersolar.com. Questions can also be emailed to CiderSolar@HecateEnergy.com.

The State's renewable energy siting law, Section 94-c of the New York Executive Law, has strict public engagement requirements for solar projects in the pre-application phase. There will be an opportunity for public comment or adjudicatory hearing, after the permit application has been filed and during the review from the Office of Renewable Energy Siting. Regardless of legal requirements, Hecate's intention is to be available to anyone who wishes to provide feedback during this time.

Environmental Impacts

Q: How has Hecate mitigated impacts to wildlife and other sensitive habitats?

Hecate initially identified a broad area (approximately 7,000 acres) to be studied for potential siting of solar facilities. Pre-construction field efforts to study wetlands, wildlife, visual resources, cultural resources, and other sensitive resources were commenced in July 2020 and/or will continue to intermittently occur until the end of March 2021. Hecate has prepared a wildlife site characterization study and is currently consulting with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and the Office of Renewable Energy Siting on potential impacts from the Project and any previous observations of species within the Project Area. This study will be made available to the public at the time of permit application filing.

Based on project-specific studies, consultation with regulatory agencies, and public feedback, Hecate has refined the area in which the Project will ultimately be sited, which is anticipated to be approximately 3,000 to 4,000 acres. This approach provided flexibility during Project development to minimize and avoid impacts to wetlands, cultural resources, visual resources, wildlife habitat, and other sensitive resources.

Q: Will the Project impact weather or climate patterns?

Hecate is not aware of weather pattern changes as a result of solar project construction nor operation. Benefits to the local climate could be realized through increased vegetation and improvements to soil and water quality. Unlike conventional power plants, operating solar facilities use little to no water.

Q: Will the Project impact my health?

Hecate is not aware of negative impacts to health as a result of solar projects of this scale. Solar projects represent an extremely benign type of energy with no burning of fuels nor emissions during operation.

Modern solar panels are designed to absorb sunlight and only reflect very little. While impacts from glare would be considered negligible, as part of Hecate's permitting requirements, Hecate will be undergoing a glint and glare study which takes into consideration the location of homes relative to panels. This analysis will be shared with the public once completed.

Q: I am a non-participating landowner. What are the setbacks from my property? Will I be able to hear or see the panels?

The required setback dimension is 100 feet from non-participating property line or 250 feet from a residence, whichever is greater. Fencing will be installed around the entire Project perimeter and landscaping will be installed outside of the fence. Hecate is working individually with landowners to discuss strategies for continued property access, per each specific landowner agreement.

Due to the low profile of solar projects, there is ample opportunity for vegetation screening of panels. Electrical collection lines will be virtually underground with the exception of discrete segments connecting

to aboveground inverters and substations. A planting and screening plan is being developed in advance of Project construction as part of Hecate's permitting requirements; plantings will be completed in accordance with State and/or local laws to minimize impacts to local viewsheds and to avoid shading of panels. Hecate's construction subcontractor will be responsible for installing plantings in accordance with permitting requirements. The contractor will check the status of plantings after one year of installation and will be responsible for maintaining plantings over the life of the Project.

Hecate is committed to collaborating with local landowners to develop a landscaping design that mitigates visual concerns. If landowners have specific concerns regarding their property, please contact CiderSolar@HecateEnergy.com.

Impacts from noise due to the solar panels are expected to be negligible. During the day, if standing within 24 inches of a panel, a small "clicking" noise every 90 seconds may be observed as the panels follow the sun. During the night, these mechanisms are turned off. Hecate is also in the process of performing a noise study for the Project, which takes into consideration potential sensitive receptors.

Q: What types of vegetation will be used in the screening plan?

Vegetation will include species native to the area; trees will be installed on Project-controlled land at 6 to 7 feet tall and shrubs at 3 to 5 feet tall. Once matured, the vegetation will have a screening effect and will minimize impacts to local viewsheds. Screening designs will vary based on location (e.g., screening from roadways vs. from residences).

Q: What will the impacts be to agriculture after decommissioning of the Project? How will soil compaction be minimized?

While solar panels temporarily displace opportunities for traditional agricultural practices, Hecate is exploring options for co-productive agricultural opportunities, including sheep grazing, establishing pollinator habitat, and other continuing agricultural uses. Hecate looks forward to collaborating with locals on these co-productive agricultural opportunities.

The Project will be decommissioned, and the Project Site restored, in accordance with the project-specific Decommissioning and Site Restoration Plan and Agricultural Mitigation Plan, which will be available for public consumption upon 94-c application filing. These plans have specific requirements regarding soil decompaction practices. To the extent practicable, collocation of Project components (e.g., collection lines) with existing roadways has been prioritized in Project design, which will help to minimize soil compaction.