

SOLAR ARRAY ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Cheryl Pollock, Pine Hill Bend

- 1. Disrupts wild life habitat on agriculture site**
- 2. Well & Water pollution**
- 3. Photovoltaic Heat Island (PVHI) effect: + local temps**
- 4. Toxic Panel Recycling**

Supervisor Barrett and Town Board Members:

I am Cheryl Pollock, a 54 year resident of Clifton Park 8 Pine Hill Bend.

I do not want Solar Farms in my neighborhood. I request the Town **end** Special Use Permits for Industrial Solar Arrays in Conservation Residential (CR) zones.

A CR district was designed to balance low-density housing with permanent preservation of open space, agricultural land and natural resources, requiring 50% open space in developments. What possible value can a Solar Farm provide to a CR zoned area by Special Use Permit?

My comments pertain to environmental issues of Solar Arrays in NYS as listed on this Chart:

My Solar farms concerns are listed on this poster

1. Disruption of biodiversity on agricultural property
2. Wells and water infrastructure bring polluted during construction, by rainfall leaching or by toxic glass panels damaged or disposed of improperly
3. Increase in local temperature called Photovoltaic Island effect (PVHI)
4. Disposal and recycling of the toxic panels

The Green lobby is trying to save the environment by destroying the environment. The only Green I see are the Green dollars of subsidies and loans being skimmed from the taxpayers to globalist corporations for an unproven solar experiment!

1. Solar Farms require significant land area, leading to habitat destruction and disruption of ecosystems and wetlands that can affect endangered species when agricultural land is turned into an industrial site. The removal or alteration of habitats cause wildlife to migrate, adapt or perish, leading to population declines of deer, turkeys, rabbits, and bald eagles whose environment we happily share.

Often overlooked is the bird population. We've all had birds fly into our clean picture windows. Now imagine over 14,000 picture windows acting as a visual trap where birds mistake them for water or air, causing collisions that results in injury or death. Studies show that our migratory birds are most susceptible to such accidents, significantly reducing their numbers. This raises critical questions about the balance between renewable energy goals and wildlife conservation.

2. Solar panels are meant to clean up our environment, yet their production is anything but clean or safe. The production of solar panels relies heavily on toxic materials, creating environmental and health risks that persist long after panels are installed. Silicon tetrachloride, a byproduct of purifying silicon for solar cells, is a prime example. This corrosive substance can cause severe skin burns and respiratory issues upon exposure. When not properly managed, it contaminates soil and water, rendering agricultural land unusable and harmful to aquatic ecosystems. If toxic particles settle in local soil or water, long-term risks may include groundwater contamination or uptake by local crops.

Improperly managed solar construction sites can pollute water, primarily through soil runoff caused by land clearing, grading and vegetation removal. Runoff may carry pollutants from construction including oil, grease, or chemicals into local water sources. As private international finance and investment companies race to build solar arrays they often hire inexperienced temporary solar developers who may inadvertently violate construction permits and mismanage storm water control.

A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) needs to be created and enforced to prevent construction pollutants from entering storm drains, local wells, and water bodies and to comply with the Clean Water Act.

3. As solar arrays convert large amounts of sunlight into electricity, they radiate heat. Large-scale solar farms can raise the local air temperature to rise 7 degrees ,particularly at night.This phenomena is known as Photovoltaic Heat Island effect or PVHI. It is similar to Urban Heat effect of concrete in cities. As one solar company recommended " If you are sensitive to heat, you may be more comfortable lengthening the distance between your home and the solar farm." I resent their audacity that to accommodate their solar venture, we must simply move from our home!

solar

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Good evening. My name is Francis Florio, and I live in the Fairway Woods neighborhood of Ballston Lake, New York.

I would like to thank the Clifton Park Town Board for holding this public hearing on community solar projects and for considering a vote on a moratorium.

As many of you can probably tell from my accent, I haven't always lived in upstate New York. I was born in Brooklyn and raised on a quiet residential block on the south shore of Staten Island. Over time, I watched my neighborhood change dramatically. Developers were able to influence zoning decisions, and the woods surrounding our home were cleared and replaced with densely built housing.

My parents moved to Staten Island hoping to raise a family in a quieter, more open environment while still remaining part of New York City—but that changed quickly.

I share this story because I made a deliberate decision to leave that environment behind. I came here seeking a community that values open space, natural beauty, and farmland. When my wife and I bought our home in Fairway Woods, we truly believed it would be our forever home.

Today, I'm saddened to say that may no longer be the case—and the reason is the continued loss of prime farmland to community solar development.

Here in Clifton Park, we've already seen multiple solar arrays constructed on land zoned Conservation Residential. Unlike what happened in my hometown, these projects aren't even attempting to change zoning laws. Instead, they're using the Special Use Permit process to push projects through quickly, often without fully considering the long-term impact on our community.

If I wanted to live next to an industrial facility, I would have stayed in New York City.

On April 21, 2026, I attended a Clifton Park Town Hall meeting where the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan was discussed. During that meeting, I learned—quite shockingly—that Clifton Park has lost 85% of its farmland.

I'll repeat that: 85%.

How can we, in good conscience, praise a farmland protection plan while simultaneously allowing out-of-state energy companies to replace what remains of our farmland with solar arrays? The contradiction is difficult to ignore.

Voting YES on the moratorium will allow the town board to properly reevaluate their town codes as they pertain to community solar arrays. The NYS Constitution does not specifically prohibit solar farms, of course, but art. 14, Section 4 establishes a policy to "conserve and protect natural resources and scenic beauty and encourage the development and improvement of agricultural lands for the production of food and other agricultural products." This completely supports the premise that these solar arrays should not be placed on farmland.

Currently the Clifton Park Town Code, DOES prohibit Tier 3 solar farms on prime farmland. I would argue that a moratorium should allow the Town to explore whether, in conformance with the State Constitution, Tier 2 solar farms also be prohibited on prime farmland. Please reference section 208-80(C)(12) – "Agricultural resources. Any Tier 3 solar energy system located on the areas that consist of prime farmland or farmland of statewide importance shall to the maximum extent practicable avoid disturbance of these most valuable/productive farmland soils."

It is for these reasons; I strongly support implementing a moratorium on community solar projects in the Town of Clifton Park.

Thank you.

Solar

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Importance of Soil in Clifton Park's Agricultural Future

Soils are the life blood of every organism that exists on the terrestrial surface of this earth. We understand this since our early schooling, learning about food chains, where illustrations started with a plant.

Within Clifton Park's footprint there are very productive soils. However, seventy-five years have witnessed the deterioration of agriculture, where formerly large expanses of already cleared acreage, featuring moderate topography and good drainage became residential, commercial or industrial land uses. This evening, our attention is focused upon solar, and the industrialized blemish which it transmits.

At the April 21, 2026, Town Board Meeting, comments on the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan were overwhelming in support of initiatives, ideas and concepts leading to a **thriving** agricultural presence. I select the word thrive where others speak of sustainability. Something may be sustained for long periods on life support, which is not our expectation. Certain terms were also spoken emphasizing the Plans' vision: Protection, Sustainability, Opportunity, Education. Ponder them as a continuum, then consider these terms like dominos. What would be education's purpose where opportunities to use it are voided, because essential resources vanished, leaving protection redundant.

All soils are not the same, whereas some are more productive than others. In a parallel thought, your mother encouraged fruits and vegetables for good nutrition, while calling your consumption of potato chips and cheese puffs junk food.

A geographic analysis conducted for the Agriculture Plan examined multiple factors found to occur on land ownership parcels. The outcome establishes five statistically significant resource categories, beginning with the lowest (Tier5) to highest priority (Tier 1) as measures of importance for agricultural land protection. The 52 Tier 1 properties, which include the former 200 ± acre Teresko Farm on MacElroy Road, comprise only 7.7 % of Clifton Park's footprint. Their soils constitute the best that remains from our Towns' once extensive agricultural and open space history.

NRCS SSURGO soils data classifies these former Teresko farmlands as:

Prime Farmland	70%
Farmland of Statewide Importance	12%
Prime Farmland if Drained	18%
Not Prime Farmland	0%

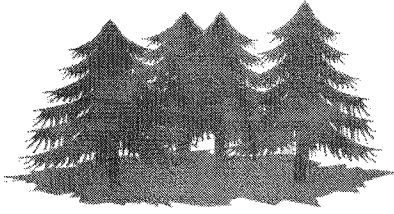
One hundred percent of this land units surface encompass the fertile resources essential to inspire a **thriving** Ag environment; as such they are irreplaceable! Other adjacent or proximal properties in Tiers 2 & 3 are also distinctive. Comprehensively, their removal from the current land use matrix becomes another step toward extinction.

The task before us is pivotal. Continued dissolving of remaining ag land resources removes the essential component necessary to propel opportunities of the Ag plan forward. Further investigation, criteria establishment and analysis are needed to generate clear and defensible policy expressing responsible siting of solar energy projects as well as connected resource retention.

Thank You.

Kurt Swartz, May 5, 2026

Solar - Anne Dillenbeck



Friends of Clifton Park Open Space
P.O. Box 821, Clifton Park, New York 1206

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May 5, 2026

The Honorable Members of the Town Board
Town of Clifton Park
1 Town Hall Plaza
Clifton Park, NY 12065

Dear Member of the Town Board:

The Friends of Clifton Park Open Space (FRIENDS) is writing to strongly urge the Town Board to adopt a local law to impose a six-month moratorium on Tier II and Tier III solar energy system applications. In addition, we urge the Board to consider including data centers in this resolution. We are supporting the moratorium for several reasons including: protecting open space, preserving local environmental habitats, and ensuring community control over development and quality of life.

In 2003, the Town of Clifton Park embarked on a Western Clifton Park Land Conservation Plan & Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS). The GEIS study, performed by Clough Harbour & Associates LLP, assessed the environmental impacts that may occur with future development in the Western Area of the Town. As a result, the Conservation Residential Zoning was formally adopted by the Town Board in April 2005.

At the time of this pivotal planning effort, solar/clean energy initiatives were still in their infancy. In 2008, New York State took its first steps to address greenhouse gas emissions related to energy with large tax credits. Community solar in New York State finally gained significant momentum around 2018-2019, following the establishment of the Community Distributed Generation (CDG) program in 2015. The state became the national leader in 2020 and passed 2 GW of installed capacity by late 2023, primarily driven by NY-Sun incentives and the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act.

As a result of these initiatives, Clifton Park began to see commercial proposals for Community Solar Farm installations. The first Large-scale Photovoltaic Installation took place on the Town's Capped Landfill in 2015. The project was financially supported by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) as part of an initiative to encourage solar projects across the state. Since that time, nine additional Community Solar Projects have been installed in the Town, eight of which are in the Conservation Residential (CR) Zone. A ninth proposed Community Solar project is also sited in the CR Zone. This disproportionate siting of solar projects in the Western Zone means large quantities of open space (over 350 acres), large tracts of orchards and forest, and several prime

agricultural lands were converted into an industrial use. The Town Code was adopted to protect rural character, agricultural heritage, and natural resources of the CR Zone while ensuring new development complemented the landscape. The current reality contravenes the zoning goals established in the Town's Comprehensive Plan as well as the stated intention of CR Zoning that resulted from the GEIS Study.

Unfortunately, the previous 2021 Town moratorium on solar projects did little to address the impacts of community solar on open space, farmland and the rural character of western Clifton Park. No formal study such as a GEIS review of solar impacts on the Town's rural character took place during this moratorium and, as a result, the subsequent zoning code changes did little to advance the goals of the CR Zone such as the preservation of land as permanently protected open space. The Town mainly considered state planning rules around community solar projects and codified these standards in the town code. Hence, since the new zoning rules were adopted in 2021, four projects have been installed in the CR Zone.

Given this history, it is crucial that the Town Board adopt this moratorium now in order to assess the future impacts of additional solar projects on the Western area of Clifton Park. The western part of our town is being industrialized by these projects consuming pristine open space and agricultural land while destroying the rural character and eradicating visually pleasing scenic views and ecological resources. In addition, any amendment to the previous GEIS should also consider the impact of large AI data centers, which consume extremely large quantities of electric energy and water, on the open space resources of the Town as this trend is beginning to gather momentum and can severely impact a rural area.

This proposed initiative aligns with our community's goals to:

- 1) Preserve and enhance the historic, residential, agricultural and rural nature of the Town of Clifton Park while encouraging managed economic growth.
- 2) Maintain a continuing planning process for the Town, with emphasis on the quality of life for all Town residents and an appropriate balance of land uses.
- 3) Ensure that all future development takes into account its environmental impacts on the Town especially in terms of water supply, water quality, open space, scenic viewsheds, prime farmland, and historic preservation.


We believe enacting this moratorium and a concomitant study (i.e., amended GEIS) of the impacts of these technologies on the CR Zone is a crucial step forward for the future of our municipality, open space, and community character.

Thank you for your dedicated service to our community. We urge you to vote in favor of this important measure.

Very truly yours,



Frank Berlin
President, Friends of Clifton Park Open Space

 Outlook


Request to include correspondence in permanent record

From Robin [REDACTED]

Date Thu 4/30/2026 1:52 PM

To Phil Barrett <PBarrett@cliftonpark.org>; planning@cliftonpark.org <planning@cliftonpark.org>; Caitlin Fantini <CFantini@cliftonpark.org>

Cc Robin Stryker [REDACTED]

 1 attachment (2 MB)

CliftonPark_Stryker_Letter04262026.PDF;

Dear Mr. Philip Barrett,

We sincerely appreciate the time and diligence the Township has devoted to reviewing the DG Cooley Solar project.

Attached is a correspondence that we respectfully request be reviewed and included in the permanent record.

Sincerely,

Eric K. Stryker
Robin L. Stryker

Town of Clifton Park
Planning & Zoning Department
1 Town Hall Plaza
Clifton Park, NY 12065

April 26, 2026

To the Town of Clifton Park Planning & Zoning Department:

It is our understanding that the Town of Clifton Park is considering the passing of a moratorium as it pertains to solar projects. As such, we are writing as the owners of the land on MacElroy Road that is currently under consideration for a proposed community solar energy project in partnership with Madison Energy Infrastructure. We, the Stryker family, would like to express our full and unwavering support for this solar project and implore the Town of Clifton Park to consider some form of exception to allow the DG Cooley solar project on MacElroy Road to continue permitting activities through the moratorium with the planning board.

We understand that the Project Manager, Billy Chan, has been working closely and transparently with the Planning Department for over a year, and has also gone above and beyond the town's requirements to reduce any potential concerns. Despite this, we understand that there has been local resident concern which unfortunately resulted in the spread of misinformation such as: calling it a 119-acre project when it is only a 19-acre project, and indicating that the project has not been in compliance with applicable requirements. Overall, we have found Madison Energy Infrastructure to be a highly professional, responsive, and ethical partner throughout this process. Their commitment to environmental stewardship, community engagement, and regulatory compliance has given us full confidence in their ability to deliver a responsible and well-managed project.

With this correspondence we share our background, rationale, and long-term considerations that led to our decision to pursue this important and forward-looking initiative in a solar project. Our family has owned this land for multiple generations. We each attended the Shenendehowa School District, graduating in the class of 1986 and class of 1983, respectively. We personally enjoyed the land while growing up, hiking and dirt-biking on it, regularly posting signage prohibiting hunting to protect its wildlife, planting trees and cultivating our own family garden. Although we have never actively farmed the land ourselves, it has been leased to local farmers for decades and was an agricultural parcel throughout that time. However, the economics of such arrangements have changed. Simply put, the rental income from farming no longer comes close to covering the ongoing school and property taxes and other carrying costs. It was also never our family's intention to have the land farmed forever. As such, we have decided that continued farming is not a financially viable or sustainable path for us going forward.

Recognizing this reality, we took years to evaluate various alternative uses for the land—commercial, residential, and energy-related. Our parents' intention in owning the land has always been to ensure that the land serves a productive, community-positive purpose while securing financial stability for our family and future generations. After careful consideration, we determined that a solar farm—specifically in partnership with Madison Energy Infrastructure, an industry leader—is the best possible use for this land. We consider this a win-win situation, and our parents would be proud to see this come to fruition.

Beyond the numbers, a solar farm offers meaningful benefits to our local community. It will:

- Generate clean, renewable, and local electricity thus reducing reliance on fossil fuels and contributing to New York State's ambitious climate goals;
- Create a new, stable tax revenue stream for the town without increasing population density by providing funds that can directly support local schools and municipal services;
- Preserve the rural and peaceful character of the area, avoiding the increased traffic, noise, and density associated with alternative residential development.

Our family views this project as a way to honor our parents' wishes and the land's legacy while adapting to the realities of the present and future. However, if it would be helpful to the planning board's consideration, we are willing to engage in negotiations with the previous farmer to determine whether a viable plan to farm the remainder of the parcel that would not be utilized by the solar project can be reached. However, we respectfully submit that such negotiations should not be considered a reason to postpone a vote on the solar project.

We respectfully ask for your support to provide an exception for the DG Cooley solar project through the moratorium —enabling a transition that benefits both our family and the Clifton Park community.

Sincerely,




Eric K. Stryker



Robin L. Stryker

DG Cooley LLC - Comments on Proposed Solar Moratorium

From Billy Chan [REDACTED]
Date Fri 5/1/2026 8:52 AM
To Phil Barrett <PBarrett@cliftonpark.org>
Cc John Scavo <jscavo@cliftonpark.org>; Melinda Acker <macker@cliftonpark.org>; planning@cliftonpark.org <planning@cliftonpark.org>; Caitlin Fantini <CFantini@cliftonpark.org>; Cynthia Zlogar <CZlogar@cliftonpark.org>

 1 attachment (331 KB)

Cooley_Town Board_MoratoriumHardshipRequest_2026-05-01.pdf;

Good Morning Supervisor Philip Barrett,

I hope you're well and it is nice to electronically meet you. I'm Billy Chan, the developer for the proposed solar project at 700 Mac Elroy Road.

Please see attached DG Cooley, LLC's comment letter regarding the Town's proposed solar moratorium and the public hearing on Tuesday, May 5, 2026.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if additional information would be helpful.

Have a great weekend,
Billy Chan



Billy Chan
Senior Manager, Development (Northeast)
Madison Energy Infrastructure
Remote – Albany, NY

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dated: May 1st, 2026

To: Philip Barrett, Town Supervisor
Town of Clifton Park Town Board

CC: Kevin Dailey, Town Attorney
Caitlin S. Fantini, Town Clerk
John Scavo, Jr, Planning Department Director



Town of Clifton Park
1 Town Hall Plaza, Clifton Park, NY 12065

RE: Comment on Proposed Solar Moratorium

Dear Supervisor Barrett and Members of the Town of Clifton Park Town Board,

On behalf of DG Cooley, LLC ("Applicant"), owner of the proposed Cooley Solar Project located at 700 Mac Elroy Road, Ballston Lake, New York, we respectfully submit this letter for inclusion in the public record regarding the Town's proposed Tier 3 solar moratorium.

As previously noticed to the Town of Clifton Park on October 3rd, 2025, DG Cooley, LLC is now an affiliated entity to Madison Energy Infrastructure LLC ("Madison"). Madison is a distributed generation solar developer, owner, and operator founded in 2019, with more than 1 GW of assets currently operating and serving corporate, industrial, municipal, K-12, and nonprofit customers across the United States.

The purpose of this letter is to respectfully request that any moratorium adopted by the Town include an **express hardship exemption** for solar projects that have made substantial, good-faith investments in reliance on the Town's existing zoning and permitting framework to allow those projects to continue to progress through the moratorium with the Planning Board review process.

With respect to the Cooley Solar Project, we have incurred significant and irreversible financial commitments, including, without limitation:

- Execution of site control agreements and option payments;
- Execution of PILOT agreements and related legal expenses;
- Completion of environmental studies, engineering designs, and technical reports;
- Preparation and submission of Special Use Permit and Site Plan applications, together with associated filing fees.

Adoption of a moratorium without a hardship exemption would result in material economic harm by retroactively impairing a project that has relied on duly enacted local law and has actively participated in the Town's review process. New York courts have consistently recognized that municipalities should avoid moratoria that unfairly penalize applicants who have substantially advanced projects in good faith. Absent a hardship exemption, such a moratorium would impose unnecessary burden and undermine reasonable investment-backed expectations fostered through the Town's own permitting process.

Accordingly, we respectfully request that the moratorium legislation include a provision authorizing the Town Board, upon written application, to grant a hardship exemption where an applicant demonstrates:

1. Substantial financial expenditures or contractual obligations incurred prior to adoption of the moratorium;

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2. Good-faith reliance on the zoning and permitting regulations in effect at the time of application; and
3. That denial of relief would result in undue economic hardship without advancing the stated purpose of the moratorium.

Finally, we wish to reiterate the meaningful economic and environmental benefits the Cooley Solar Project will provide to the Clifton Park community, including:

- Contracted tax revenues for Saratoga County, the Shenendehowa Central School District, and the Town of Clifton Park — a stable, long-term fiscal benefit without increasing population density or demand on local services;
- Automatic 13% bill credit discounts for low-income customers enrolled in National Grid's Energy Affordability Program ("EAP");
- Clean energy supply for approximately 800–1,000 New York homes within the National Grid service territory;
- Reduced reliance on fossil fuels and lower associated air emissions for the surrounding community; and
- Use of local construction labor, compensated in accordance with prevailing wage requirements.

We remain committed to addressing any Town concerns regarding the safe design, operation, or environmental impacts of the Project. We stand ready to provide any additional documentation the Town may require in support of a hardship determination and to continue constructive engagement with the Town and community.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If additional information would be helpful, please reach out to Billy Chan at [REDACTED]

Respectfully submitted,



Ryan Coakley
Chief Development Officer
DG Cooley, LLC





Outlook

Clifton Park Solar Moratorium public hearing May 5, 2026

From Tom Piwinski [REDACTED]

Date Tue 5/5/2026 1:41 PM

To Agatha Reid <areid@cliftonpark.org>; Zabed Manir <zmanir@cliftonpark.org>; Caitlin Fantini <CFantini@cliftonpark.org>; Phil Barrett <PBarrett@cliftonpark.org>; Kevin Dailey <kdailey@cliftonpark.org>; Mario Fantini <mFantini@cliftonpark.org>; Nancy Bellamy <nBellamy@cliftonpark.org>

 1 attachment (19 KB)

CP Solar Moratorium May 5_2026.pdf;

Please see my attached Comment Document related to the subject meeting I will unable to attend tonight. Tom Piwinski PE

May 5, 2026

To: Clifton Park Town Board Members:

Since I am unable to attend tonight's Town Board Public Hearing I would like to voice my opposition to issuing a Moratorium on Tier 2 and Tier 3 Solar Energy System Applications for the following reasons:

1. The economic model of these applications allows family farmers to keep their land in economic hard times, especially in light of the current high fuel and fertilizer prices. Solar panel installations have minimum impact on the environment and do not permanently destroy farm land.
2. Solar electric PV installations are emission free, and aid in mitigating regional electric costs. The NYISO divides NY State into load and green energy zones. The energy zones each have separate pricing for the energy component as well as the transmission and distribution costs of bringing electric energy into a zone. Additionally, fossil fuel generated electricity has spiked recently via the fuel adjustment charge tied to the price of gas, and oil. PV generation within a zone does not carry a fuel adjustment.
3. Grid stability often analyzed by transient stability studies conducted by the NYISO clearly result in more stable grids (reduction of black and brown outs) with generation locations spread throughout the grid circuit. Essentially this is a many eggs in multiple baskets concept.
4. More dispersed distributed generation reduces transmission and distribution electrical losses.
5. Clean energy resources reduce detrimental environment and health impacts.
6. Rather than a moratorium, I would recommend a serious focus on developing standards to supplement existing State and Federal code and interconnect requirements. A group of people within Clifton Park with the expertise as well as other concerns should be formed immediately with a focused mission.

Tom Piwinski, PE

