

# NYSERDA Large-Scale Renewables

Update on the NYSERDA Agricultural Strategies and Agricultural Mitigation Fund



**NYSERDA**

NYS Association of County Planning Directors Meeting  
January 21, 2022

# Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA)

## New York's Nation-Leading Climate Targets

85% Reduction in GHG Emissions by 2050

100% Zero-emission Electricity by 2040

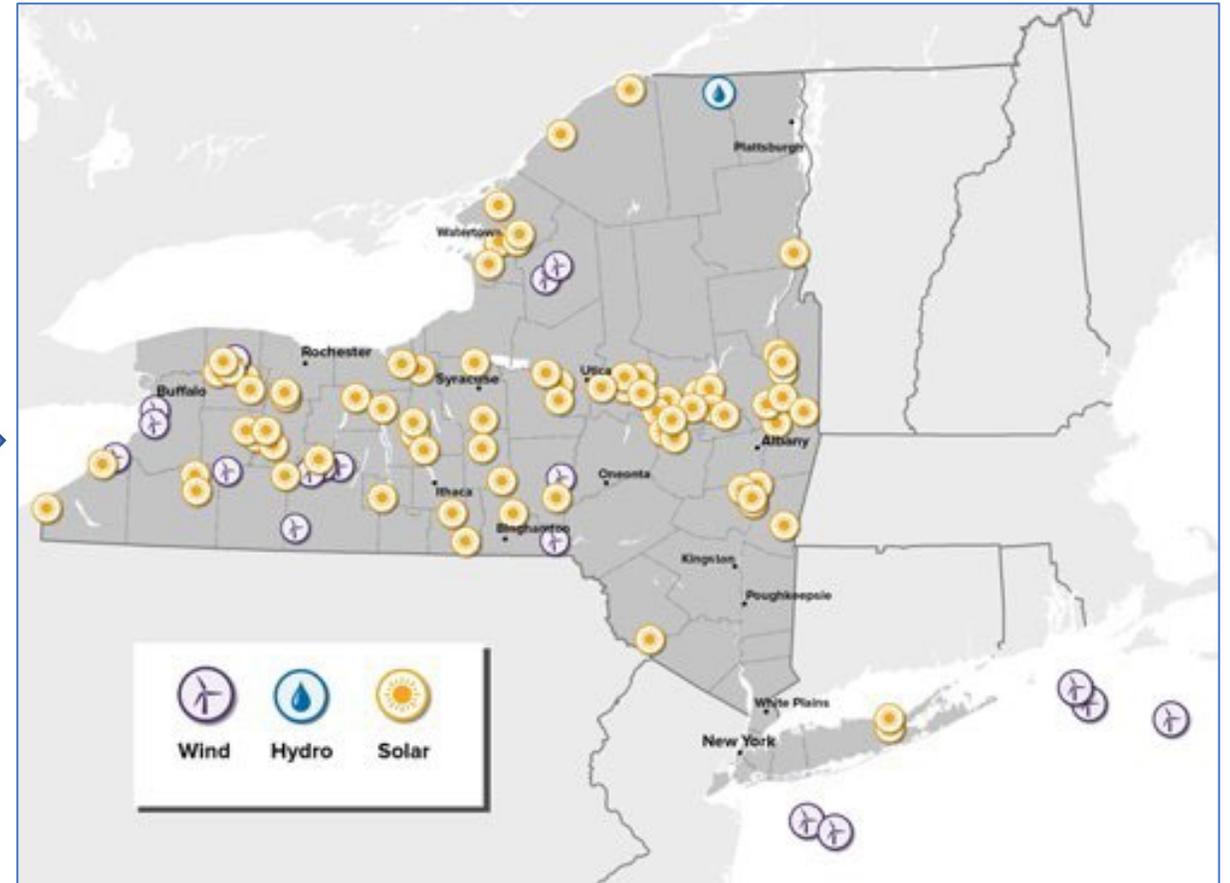
70% Renewable Energy by 2030

9,000 MW of Offshore Wind by 2035

3,000 MW of Energy Storage by 2030

6,000 MW of Solar by 2025

22 Million Tons of Carbon Reduction through Energy Efficiency and Electrification



# NYSERDA's Role in Procuring Large-Scale Renewables

- Annual competitive solicitations issued through 2025 to contract with new large-scale renewable generation projects, primarily wind and solar.
- Three Primary Evaluation Components:
  - Price (70%)
  - Project Viability and Operational Flexibility (20%)
  - Economic Benefits to NYS (10%)
- NYSERDA procurement criteria and minimum thresholds set in consultation with other state agencies and partners.
  - Minimum Threshold Criteria to submit a bid
  - Interconnection and Energy Deliverability
  - Permitting Maturity and Enviro. and Ag. Mitigation Plans
- Projects bidding for REC Contracts range in development maturity from relatively new (site design still underway) to near-shovel ready (fully permitted).



Office of Renewable Energy Siting



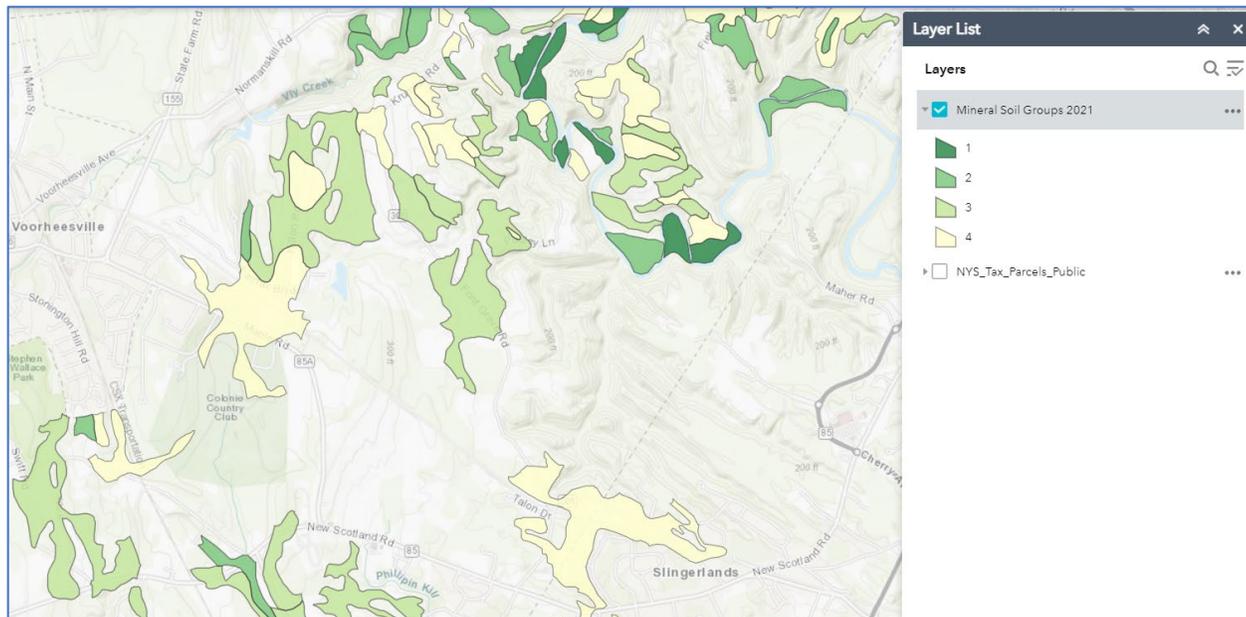
# NYSERDA Agricultural Mitigation Requirements

- **Solar Construction Mitigation Guidelines ([Link](#))**
  - All awarded projects are required to comply with the NYS Dept. of Ag. and Markets (AGM) Guidelines for constructing on agricultural lands, and all RES Agreements contain the Guidelines as a contract Exhibit.
- **Notice of Intent Process ([Link](#))**
  - For all projects in NYS Agricultural Districts not subject to the Office of Renewable Energy Siting, NYSERDA works with the project developer to submit a Notice of Intent to AGM for their review and to solicit any recommended modifications to the project design.
- **Agricultural Mitigation Fund**
  - Any project awarded a NYSERDA contract after 2019 that is constructed on more than 30 acres of Mineral Soil Groups (MSG) 1-4 is required to pay an Agricultural Mitigation Fee based on the total area on MSG 1-4, or commit to other to-be determined mitigation measures of comparable value.
  - Further detail: [RESRFP21-1 Permitting Plan Requirements and Guidelines](#)

# Agricultural Mitigation Resources for Developers

## Agricultural Mitigation for Solar Facilities

- All participating developers across NYSERDA's solar programs must comply with the Agricultural Mitigation Fund requirements and/or pursue mitigation mechanisms to offset mitigation payments.
- NYSERDA provides resources to developers to inform project siting decisions: [www.nyserda.ny.gov/ces/rfp](http://www.nyserda.ny.gov/ces/rfp) →



## Agricultural Mitigation Resources

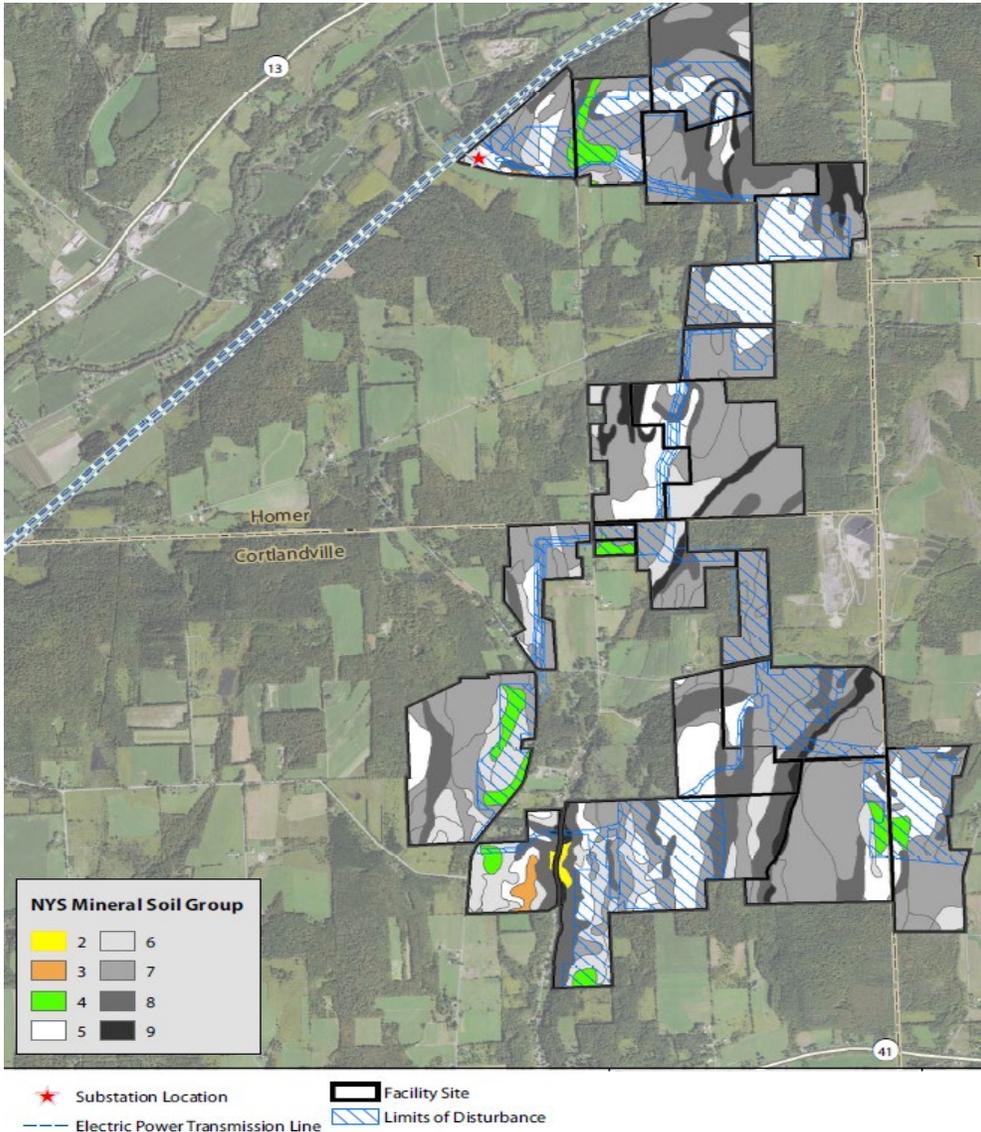
In order to facilitate the protection of agricultural lands in the state's Agricultural Districts, Proposers awarded under RESRFP21-1 may be responsible for making an agricultural mitigation payment to a designated fund based on the extent to which the solar project footprint overlaps with New York's highest quality agricultural soils, identified as Mineral Soil Groups classifications 1 through 4 (MSG 1-4). This mitigation approach intends to set a benchmark for potential agricultural mitigation payments, which solar project developers may be able to reduce by minimizing the facility's impact on MSG 1-4 and/or introducing or retaining agricultural productivity on the project site. Instances where Proposers cannot avoid or minimize impacts on MSG 1-4 will result in a payment to a fund administered by NYSERDA in consultation with the Department of Agriculture and Markets to support ongoing regional agricultural practices.

[RESRFP21-1 Map of NYS Mineral Soil Groups classifications 1 through 4 \(MSG 1-4\)](#)

Downloadable data for MSG 1-4, by [REDC Region](#):

- [Capital District \[ZIP\]](#)
- [Central New York \[ZIP\]](#)
- [Finger Lakes \[ZIP\]](#)
- [Long Island \[ZIP\]](#)
- [Mid-Hudson \[ZIP\]](#)
- [Mohawk Valley \[ZIP\]](#)
- [North Country \[ZIP\]](#)
- [Southern Tier \[ZIP\]](#)
- [Western New York \[ZIP\]](#)

# Agricultural Mitigation in Practice



## Agricultural Mitigation Siting Decisions

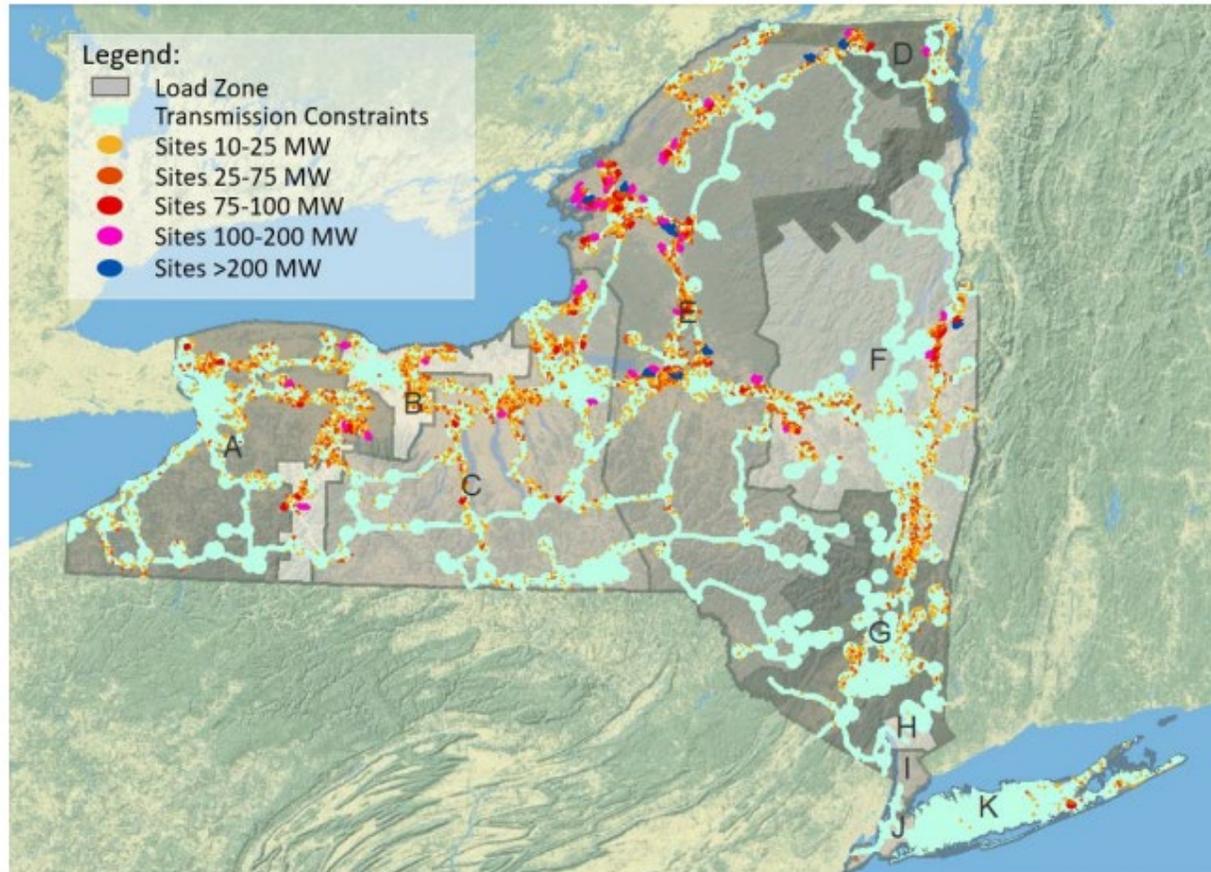
- Solar developers are accounting for where high quality soils are located on their proposed sites and using this information to inform site design when feasible.
- The Agricultural Mitigation Fund mechanism creates a financial incentive to avoid building on MSG 1-4 to the maximum extent possible.
- Other factors such as other land cover types and active agricultural land may still warrant development on MSG 1-4 when alternatives are not feasible.

RESRFP21-1 Attachment G - Agricultural Mitigation Estimate Calculator

Project	MWac	Total Parcel(s) Area (Acres)	Facility Area (# of Acres) on Mineral Soil Group:					Total Facility Area (Acres)
			MSG 1	MSG 2	MSG 3	MSG 4	MSG 5:10/ Other	
Example Project 1	180	2,400	10	215	450	100	425	1,200
Example Project 2	20	400	-	40	50	5	35	130

# Agricultural Mitigation in Practice

Figure 7 - Utility-Scale Solar PV Potential Sites by Size Categories



For illustrative purposes, highlighting existing transmission corridors.

Source: DPS-NYSERDA Clean Energy Standard White Paper, June 2020 ([Link](#))

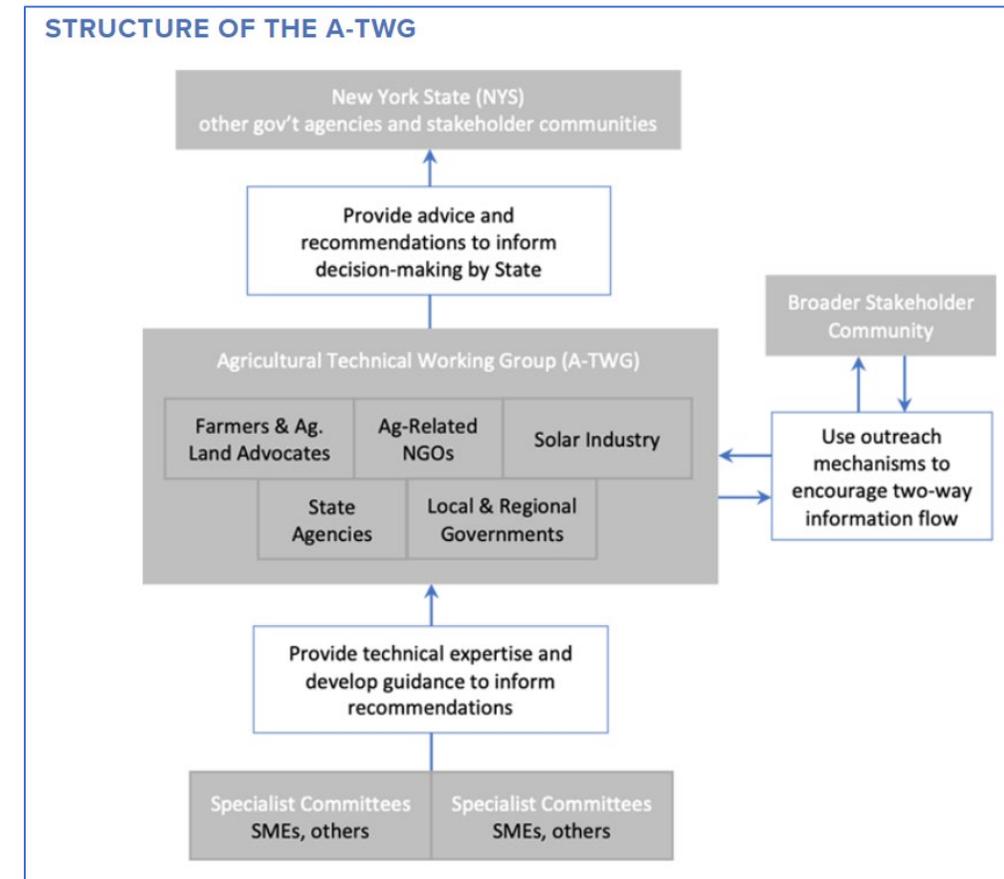
## Agricultural Mitigation Siting Decisions

- Solar developers will respond to incentives and priorities; but development constraints remain when seeking viable project sites.
- Proximity to electrical transmission infrastructure is a critical factor that developers must account for when finding a viable project site. Project design can be modified to mitigate agricultural impacts once a site has a viable plan to interconnect to the grid.

# Future Agricultural Mitigation Policy

## Agricultural Technical Working Group (A-TWG)

- The A-TWG serves as an advisory body to the State of New York and other participating entities, providing advice and guidance to help steer efforts to advance renewable (primarily solar) energy development across scales in a responsible way while appropriately balancing the needs and contributions of New York State's agricultural operations, lands, and farmers.
  - Dual-Use, Crop Production and Livestock
  - Future Dual-Use, Agrivoltaic Systems
  - Native Species and Pollinators
  - Adjacent Land Preservation/Restoration
- Comprised of agricultural land and farmer advocates, solar developers and operators, non-governmental organizations that focus on clean energy, climate, and environmental protection, local government officials, academic experts, and state agencies.
- Resources available at [www.nyatwg.com](http://www.nyatwg.com)



# Future Agricultural Mitigation Policy

## Farmland Protection Working Group (FPWG)

- FPWG is a coordinated effort among the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, the NYS DEC, NYSERDA, NYS Office of Renewable Energy Siting (ORES), and the NYS Department of Public Service.
- Objective: Recommend strategies to the State that encourage and facilitate input from municipalities on the siting process of major renewable energy facilities and to minimize the impact of siting on agriculture, to be implemented by one or multiple member agencies.
- A-TWG will make recommendations to inform the ultimate strategies to be greed upon by the FPWG

## Smart Solar Siting Scorecard

- Actively under development tool for solar projects, to be used to identify and prioritize mitigation strategies to minimize ag. impacts and maximize co-use and other ag-sustaining practices on solar sites.
- Introduced in the 2021 NYSERDA procurement, undergoing further refinement by the A-TWG to establish thresholds for bidding projects and allow for a clearer hierarchy of objectives and priorities for developers to respond to when siting and designing projects.



Office of Renewable Energy Siting



# Q&A



**Bram Peterson**  
Project Manager, Large-Scale Renewables

**NYSERDA**  
[Bram.Peterson@nyserra.ny.gov](mailto:Bram.Peterson@nyserra.ny.gov)

