FLAT CREEK SOLAR PROJECT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CORDELIO POWER

1. What impact will the Flat Creek solar project have on neighboring property values?

Multiple property value studies from across the country have demonstrated that proximity to large-scale solar projects (a) does not measurably affect property values, and (b) **does not impair the sale** of agricultural or residential land near the project. In some instances, property values **may be influenced, positively or negatively, by a particular project setting**, the use of the land prior to the introduction of the project, and other factors, including the **long-term tax revenue and employment opportunities created by the project** for the local community.

2. What are the panels made of? Do they contain cadmium?

Solar panels typically consist of **tempered glass, aluminum, copper, silver, and semiconductor materials,** all of which are common materials found in almost all of our households and vehicles already, and which are safe under all normal conditions. The panels are enclosed with glass and an aluminum frame and then tightly sealed. We are not aware of any instances where chemicals were released from any solar panels into the environment. With respect to cadmium, crystalline silicon PV panels, which are heavily used in the industry (90% of all solar panels) do not contain cadmium and **pose no material risk of toxicity** to public health and safety.

3. How much wear and tear can the panels take?

Solar panel racking and anchoring systems are built to withstand high-force winds. Flexible racking systems operate like a chain link fence under duress, bending with the wind rather than staying rigid and breaking. With respect to hail and wind, solar panels are typically tested and certified to withstand hail of up to one inch falling at 50 mph and **winds of up to 150 mph.**

In addition, we will be exploring adding "stow" protection to the panels we select. Stow protection allows the panels to move to either a horizontal position in the event of high winds to reduce exposure, or to a vertical position in the event of a hailstorm to minimize potential damage.

The panels are designed for decades of corrosion-free operation, as they are encapsulated between two layers of transparent plastic to prevent exposure to the ambient air and moisture. These encapsulation layers are further protected with a layer of tempered glass on the front and a polymer sheet on the back. This same material has been used for decades between layers of tempered glass to give car windshields and hurricane windows their great strength, **allowing them to stay intact**, even under extreme conditions.

4. How will the Flat Creek solar project affect prime farmland?

The Flat Creek project will have minimal impact (less than 1%) on prime farmland in Montgomery County. While the County holds approximately 40,000 acres of prime farmland soils (as defined by the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, or NYSDAM, as soils having a mineral soil group (MSG) ranking between 1 and 4 [MSG1-4]), only 204 acres of the Flat Creek project resides on such soil. The construction, restoration, and decommissioning of the Flat Creek project will be conducted in accordance with NYSDAM's "**Guidelines for Solar Energy Projects – Construction Mitigation for Agricultural Lands**" to mitigate construction impacts.

5. How will stormwater discharge be handled?

The project will have a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), which will provide for sediment and erosion controls to manage the volume and composition of any stormwater discharged from the project site. There are no anticipated stormwater runoff issues for land hosting or adjacent to panel areas.

6. How do solar projects affect agricultural activities?

Unlike other forms of development, the temporary conversion of agricultural land for use as a solar project site prevents more impactful development from occurring, preserving the land for agricultural use in the future.

Solar projects are generally considered to have a low impact to the land. While earth disturbance will occur during construction, once the project is completed the underlying ground will be restored and reseeded in accordance with NYSDAM's guidelines. During the project's lifespan, vegetation can grow under the panels which allows the land to regenerate, retain water and topsoil, and create habitat for local wildlife and native pollinators, which **improves the soil health over time**. These effects can increase the productivity and value of the land for agriculture once the project is decommissioned.

Further, participation in solar projects is voluntary – farmers and landowners sign up to participate if they think doing so is best for their farms and families. Cordelio coordinates with landowners to site project equipment. If not all land is used for the project, farming may continue on those areas outside of the project area.

7. Will groundwater/wells be affected by the Flat Creek solar project?

The water table within the vicinity of the project will not be negatively affected by the Flat Creek solar project – during either construction or operations. The project equipment is installed at relatively shallow depths – for example:

- Transformer pads: approximately 3 to 4 feet;
- Substation structure foundations: approximately 4 to 6 feet;
- Racking posts: 8 to 12 feet;
- Collection lines: 4 to 5 feet.

Given the shallow placement of project equipment, we do not foresee any impact to groundwater sources. As an added safety measure, we conducted a well survey which was sent to all landowners within 1,000 feet of the project site to identify any wells located within 100 feet of collection lines and access roads, 500 feet of drill locations, and 200 feet of racking post locations. For any active water wells within these distances, Cordelio will engage a qualified third party to conduct potability testing both before and after construction.

8. What happens to the panels when they reach the end of their lifespan?

New York State requires a Decommissioning and Restoration Plan (the "Plan") to be developed and implemented as part of Article VIII of the Public Service Law (formerly known as the "94-c" permitting process). The Plan will outline the ways Cordelio will safely and responsibly remove all solar or solar-related equipment when the project reaches the end of its useful life. The Plan will also detail how the property within the project area will be restored to as close as possible to its pre-facility state to allow for continued agricultural activity after the project is decommissioned. The Plan will also address safety procedures we will follow, the removal of any hazardous waste we may encounter as we build the facility, and how the decommissioning will be funded, along with any recycling needed. The Plan will also outline the potential future uses of the site, and the schedule we will follow in decommissioning the site. In every instance, this project will be planned, built, operated, and decommissioned in accordance with applicable guidelines and permits.

9. What financial assurances are in place to ensure clean-up takes place?

In accordance with the requirements of Article VIII, within one year of project operation, Cordelio will provide the towns of Root and Canajoharie with a financial assurance (such as a letter of credit) to ensure the towns will bear no financial responsibility for decommissioning and restoration. This financial assurance will be revaluated and adjusted (if needed) every five years and will remain active for the life of the project until decommissioning occurs.

10. How is the Flat Creek solar project being funded?

Cordelio fully funds all project development costs directly. Activities such as signing agreements with landowners, performing site assessments, managing engineers to design the facilities, and navigating the necessary permitting processes are funded during this period.

As the project enters the construction phase, Cordelio will fund all project costs from its own investment, as well as a project loan from established financial institutions. During operations, the revenue from the sale of electricity pays for day-to-day operation and maintenance activities.

11. What impacts will the Flat Creek solar project have on threatened and endangered species?

For any species identified in New York as threatened, endangered, or of special concern, surveys have been conducted in accordance with state and federal protocols. These surveys assess whether the construction and operation of the Flat Creek solar project will affect New York listed species.

Cordelio prepared and submitted a Wildlife Site Characterization Report to the Office of Renewable Energy Siting and Electrical Transmission ("ORES") in accordance with the requirements of Article VIII. This report details the results of protected species surveys within the project area. As part of the Article VIII process, the project will prepare a Net Conservation Benefit Plan which will describe the project's mitigation measures designed to offset any potential impacts to species that may occur in the project area (anticipated to be minimal). These documents, when available, can be reviewed on the ORES document management website:

https://orespermits.ny.gov/Public/MatterManagement/CaseMaster.aspx?MatterSeq=64978&MNO=23-00054

FLAT CREEK SOLAR PROJECT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – ISSUE #2

CORDELIO POWER

12. Is my view of the project taken into consideration in design?

Yes – we will be working to minimize the visibility of the project for all community members.

A visual impact assessment, including the identification of visually sensitive areas, has been performed to determine the extent and assess the significance of project visibility. The Towns of Root and Canajoharie have also been consulted to accurately determine sensitive visual areas and other areas of importance to the community.

Based on the visual impact assessment, and in accordance with §1100-2.9 pf the Article VIII regulations, Cordelio will submit a Visual Impacts Minimization and Mitigation Plan as part of its application. It will contain visual minimization and mitigation measures, a lighting plan, and screen planting plans.

13. What impact will the project have on wildlife?

Cordelio has worked diligently to ensure the Flat Creek solar project will have minimal impacts to local wildlife. As part of the siting process, we are consulting with state and federal agencies and stakeholders, including the Office of Renewable Energy Siting, NYS Department of Public Service, NYS Department of Environmental Consideration, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure that potential environmental impacts are fully considered in the project design. Studies to help assess potential impacts include seasonal avian studies, sensitive wildlife surveys, and wetland and habitat delineations. The information gathered from this comprehensive coordination and review is used to inform final siting and design as well as various resource management plans and environmental protection measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts to wildlife.

Exhibit 11 of the Article VIII application (Terrestrial Ecology) will include an analysis of the potential impacts to local wildlife, wildlife habitats, and wildlife migration corridors that may result from the construction and operation of the project. In addition, Exhibit 11 will identify and assess avoidance and minimization measures we are taking to reduce potential impacts on local wildlife and wildlife habitat.

The operation of the Flat Creek solar project will produce no pollution or emissions. **Native vegetation can grow under the panels**, which can provide pollinator habitat and food sources for local wildlife. Vegetation management concepts, such as integrated vegetation management, sheep grazing, and pollinator friendly practices, provide opportunities to promote beneficial plants species and enhance habitats on the site.

Fencing, a security measure put in place in accordance with industry best practices, will be limited to areas around panels and the substation. Collection easements between panel areas will not be fenced, which maintains corridors for larger wildlife movement through the project area.

14. What happens if the landscaping doesn't survive?

In accordance with the requirements of §1100-6.4 of the Article VIII regulations, Cordelio will work with a qualified landscape architect, arborist, or ecologist to inspect the screening plantings following the installation to identify plant material that did not survive, appears unhealthy, and/or otherwise needs replacement. Unsuccessful plantings will be removed and replaced upon discovery.

15. Will the Flat Creek solar project cause my property taxes to go up?

No – the project will not result in an increase in property taxes. The economic effects of the project are solely positive. The project will make annual payments to the towns of Root and Canajoharie, providing the towns with substantial resources to direct toward public safety, road upgrades, and other infrastructure improvements without needing to raise property taxes. In addition, the project will reduce utility bills for town residents by $1.5 million per year for the first 10 years of operation.

16. Does the Flat Creek solar project have the right of eminent domain?

No, Flat Creek does not have the right of eminent domain and receipt of a permit through the Article VIII (formerly 94(c)) process does not grant any rights of eminent domain to private entities such as Flat Creek. Flat Creek has, and will, secure all land rights for the project through voluntary contractual agreements with landowners who are interested in participating in the project.

17. Will the Flat Creek solar project make noise?

Some local noise will occur during the construction phase of a solar project (trucks, pile-driving, etc.). Over the operating life of the project, there will be minor sound emissions during the day, mainly from power inverters (that change DC current to AC current) and the substation equipment. The project will be dormant and completely quiet at night.

As part of the Article VIII application process, Cordelio will submit a detailed study of the potential noise impacts associated with the construction and operation of the facility. The results of the study will assess expected noise levels and establish that the project will meet New York State standards, which have been determined to minimize potential adverse impacts associated with construction and operation of the Flat Creek solar project. The Article VIII regulations require that noise levels are at or below 45 dBA for non-participating residents, 55 dBA for participating residences, and 55 dBA at most property boundaries.

18. Are local communities receiving energy credits to reduce local customer electricity bills?

The Public Service Commission requires that owners of major renewable energy projects that execute renewable energy contracts with NYSERDA provide a host community benefit known as the "utility bill pay program." Under this program, the project would pay $1.5 million ($5,000 per MW of project size) in utility bill credits for residents of the towns of Root and Canajoharie over the first 10 years of project operations. These credits would be used to offset utility bill amounts in the community.

19. Can solar panels be recycled?

Solar PV panels typically consist of **glass, polymer, aluminum, copper, and semiconductor materials**. Recycling technologies have emerged in the last several years that have enabled these materials to be recovered and recycled at the end of their useful life. PV solar panel recycling technologies have been shown to **recover over 95% of semiconductor materials and over 90% of the glass in the panel**. In other cases, solar PV components can be reused or refurbished to have a **second life of generating electricity**. The industry continues to work with recycling partners and to research and explore **additional cost-effective recycling technologies**.

20. Have archaeological studies been completed for the project?

Archaeological surveys are required in accordance with §1100-1.3(h) of the Article VIII regulations. The project has already submitted a Phase IA study and a Phase IB field study to the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for review. Project design and construction practices will take into consideration avoidance or mitigation for any archeological sites found within the project area. The results of all archaeological and cultural studies will be reviewed, and an effects determination will be included in the project's Article VIII application, as required by §1100-2.10 of the Article VIII regulations.

21. How will the project affect hunting?

The Flat Creek solar project will not impact ongoing hunting activities on land that is not participating in the project, and there are no restrictions or setbacks that could impact hunting on non-participating properties. Hunting activities where active construction is occurring will be temporarily suspended, but only on participating landowner property. Cordelio will coordinate with participating landowners to ensure hunting activities are conducted in a safe manner while construction workers are on site.