



Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative provides \$5m for NYSERDA's energy demonstration projects

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New York, NY According to the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), \$5 million is now available for demonstration projects that co-locate solar siting and agricultural operations in New York State. Through the Environmental Research Program, this funding will support researchers, solar developers, farmers, non-profit organizations, and local governments interested in demonstrating the use of the same land for renewable energy generation from solar panels and active farming, also known as agrivoltaics. The Climate Action Council Scoping Plan framework is supported for how New York will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and achieve net-zero emissions, and ensure all communities equitably benefit in the clean energy transition. Funding for this initiative is through the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

Through this \$5 million competitive solicitation, NYSERDA is accepting proposals to support individual agrivoltaic projects integrating both new or retrofitted solar and farm operations such as those with cattle grazing, forage, or specialty crop production, with up to \$750,000 per project. Researchers, solar developers, farmers, non-profit organizations and local governments are eligible to submit proposals that include a solar site design, marketable agricultural commodity, estimates of expected agricultural production and solar generation. Applications will be accepted through 3:00 p.m. on September 12, 2024.

NYSERDA and the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets worked in collaboration to develop this solicitation and will study the results of the participating projects.

Data collected from selected projects will be shared with farmers, solar developers and other stakeholders so that successful projects could be replicated elsewhere in New York State. Projects selected will also be required to share data on costs, benefits, and lessons learned, in addition to hosting educational events open to the public to raise awareness of how to design and operate solar sites that integrate agricultural production.

NYSERDA president and CEO Doreen Harris said, "The integration of agriculture operations and clean energy siting is important to understand the costs, benefits and market potential of locating two essential industries in the same space. We look forward to creating new public-private partnerships that can provide economic and agricultural data to demonstrate the feasibility of co-locating solar and farming to inform a future that meets both New York State's clean energy and land use priorities."

New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets commissioner Richard Ball said, “Combating the effects of climate change is a priority for the agricultural community and transitioning to renewable energy is a critical and urgent piece of that puzzle. We must work together to advance New York’s clean energy development while also supporting a vibrant agricultural economy. As recommended by the Climate Action Council and the New York State Farmland Protection Working Group, this initiative will help move us forward, finding the right balance of meeting our renewable energy goals while demonstrating what types of co-location will succeed. I look forward to continuing to partner with NYSERDA as we work to meet our climate goals and protect our farmland for generations to come.”

The announcement demonstrates New York State’s commitment to developing information and tools that support decision-making in communities and engaging property owners who are considering co-utilization opportunities for agriculture and renewable energy generation. Both the New York State Farmland Protection Working Group, overseen by AGM and the Climate Action Council recommended that the State study co-utilizing land for renewable energy generation and agricultural production and larger ground mounted solar projects have the potential to play an important role in meeting New York State’s future energy and emissions reduction needs.

Additionally, NYSERDA conducts policy and analysis-oriented environmental research to provide relevant information on the impacts and opportunities of clean energy choices and emerging energy options. NYSERDA also supports New York State’s farmers in managing their energy use through no-cost technical assistance through the Agriculture Energy Audit Program.

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