

# Inter-County Association of Western New York

% Steuben County Legislature, 3 East Pulteney Square, Bath, New York 14810

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*Representing the Counties of Allegany, Cattaraugus, Cayuga, Chautauqua, Chemung, Erie, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Niagara, Ontario, Orleans, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tompkins, Wayne, Wyoming, and Yates*

## RESOLUTION NO. 014-25

### **OPPOSING THE PROLIFERATION OF UTILITY-SCALE SOLAR PROJECTS BY THE OFFICE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY SITING (ORES) WHICH OVERRIDES LOCAL LAND USE POLICY, CAUSES LOSS OF FARMLAND AND THREATENS THE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY OF NEW YORK STATE.**

**WHEREAS**, New York State’s clean energy goals must not come at the expense of New York State’s strategic prime farmland that feeds our people, sustains rural economies, and anchors the State’s significant investments in agriculture and food processing; and

**WHEREAS**, counties across New York State are home to highly productive soils, often referred to as the State’s “breadbasket,” supporting generations of family farms, high-yield vegetable crops, and high-quality dairy production; and

**WHEREAS**, thousands of acres of farmland statewide are under construction or proposed for large-scale solar development, much of it located on strategic prime soils (soil classes 1–4), directly contradicting New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets policy, which discourages such siting; and

**WHEREAS**, the cumulative conversion of farmland to industrial solar facilities represents an unsustainable rate of loss that threatens farm viability, dairy expansion, agricultural processing capacity, and New York State’s number one industry and economic engine—agriculture—in which the State has invested billions of dollars in facilities such as Great Lakes Cheese, Chobani, and Fairlife; and

**WHEREAS**, many counties have implemented farmland protection plans to guide development toward designated growth areas while protecting prime farmland, yet these efforts are undermined by the State’s solar siting process; and

**WHEREAS**, numerous counties are experiencing disproportionate burdens of utility-scale solar development, including projects that seek waivers from New York State to bypass duly adopted local laws, comprehensive plans, and zoning regulations, thereby overriding the authority of municipalities and residents in direct conflict with the principle of “home rule” guaranteed under Article IX of the New York State Constitution; and

**WHEREAS**, such projects would irreversibly convert productive agricultural lands, erode the agricultural base, threaten food security, and undermine both the productive agricultural assets and the long-term economic stability of counties across New York State; and

**WHEREAS**, the Office of Renewable Energy Siting (ORES) has routinely approved projects that contradict farmland protection principles and override New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets policy, accelerating farmland loss instead of preventing it, thereby placing the future of the agricultural economy in jeopardy.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT**

**RESOLVED**, the Inter-County Association of Western New York, representing 2.9 million citizens in the State of New York, formally opposes the siting of large-scale industrial solar projects on New York State strategic prime farmland; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, this opposition is based on the projects' clear and irreversible harm to agriculture, food production, and rural economies; their violation of local land use law; and their broader threat to the constitutional principle of home rule; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, the State's economic development investment in dairy and agricultural processing capacity is in direct conflict with the loss of farmland needed to support dairy and agricultural production in New York State; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, the Inter-County Association of Western New York urges the Governor and the State of New York to revise solar siting policies to protect strategic prime farmland, honor local zoning and planning authority, Home Rule, and ensure that renewable energy development advances in balance with the agricultural foundation of the State's economy and food supply; and

**RESOLVED**, a certified copy of this resolution shall be forwarded to Honorable Kathy Hochul, New York State Governor; all members of the NYS Senate; all members of the NYS Assembly; and the New York State Association of Counties.

STATE OF NEW YORK)

ss.:

COUNTY OF STEUBEN)

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of a resolution duly adopted by the Inter-County Association of Western New York while in session in Livingston County on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of October 2025.

Dated: November 12, 2025  
Bath, New York



Amanda L. Chapman, Secretary  
Inter-County Association of Western New York