

December 19, 2023 Town of Chautauqua Zoning Board Update

Concerns for local solar project proposals and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) proposals

- 1 – Safety procedures for NY State solar and BESS fire fighting regulations are still inadequate. NYFD Commissioner Laura Kavanaugh: “in all these [lithium ion battery] fires – it is not a small, slow burn. It literally explodes, it is a tremendous volume of fire ...” Ripley BESS fire plan – evacuate a seven mile radius.
Ripley Fire Department refuses to approve agreement with the developer due to safety concerns. Ripley Fire Dept., “no amount of money is worth one life lost.”
 - 2 - Watershed protection - BESS or solar projects within Chautauqua Lake watershed can endanger ground water and Chautauqua Lake.
 - 3 –Solar and BESS developers should prove there is no PFAS/PFOs (forever chemicals) in any components.
 - 4 –BESS and solar projects should be required to recycle components. (Niagara Co Law)
 - 5 –Protection of farmland –The Chautauqua Farm Bureau shows that 84% of proposed solar projects target agricultural land. CFB has called for a prohibition on solar development. Amish have requested that solar be prohibited.
 - 6 – Grid security. The New York Power Authority says, “Local solar projects and battery storage units ... are not designed to run independent of the grid and will shut down if power is lost.” Intermittent ‘green energy’ destabilizes the grid.
 - 7 – Financial viability - Wall Street Journal reported the financial failure of renewables, (WSJ Business 12 6 23): “a coordinated selloff in anything with green credentials crushed the idea of making money while ‘doing good’. Solar is down 60% to 70%, wind down 48%.”
- NYSERDA: solar electricity output is 13.4% of what is claimed at this latitude and zero to 5% in winter. WSJ states 90% of profits for proposed solar projects will come from subsidies. (graph attached)