

New York State Legislature:

Re: Increasing state control in the assessment of solar/wind projects - Real Property Tax Law 487 and Section 575-b.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide comments for the Local Government portion of the New York State Joint Legislative Budget Hearing.

I am writing as a resident of Windsor, in Broome County. I have previously provided testimony on state projects such as the Bluestone Wind Project. In our community, we have already witnessed an erosion of local democracy, destruction of natural resources, and construction that is endangering our environment.

My current concern is about many of the laws and processes that have been enacted over the past few years pertaining to the streamlining of the siting process of these large-scale renewable energy projects, such as solar and wind energy, and the detrimental effect that these laws have had and will continue to have on towns across the state, eroding local home rule authority and undermining SEQRA to site industrial solar and wind projects.

My comment here is focusing on the Real Property Tax Law 487 and Section 575-b, which is not in the interest of local municipalities and their residents.

The solar and wind energy system appraisal model or models and discount rates that New York State is currently using greatly discounts the taxable value of the real property improvements that are made within towns when large-scale solar and wind projects are permitted, constructed, and put into operation. This discounted tax assessment model puts local municipalities at a disadvantage. The law would take tax revenues out of local budgets, and municipalities are unable to seek appropriate tax revenues in the event the projects come to fruition.

Governor Hochul's budget proposal would give the Office of Real Property Tax Services' (ORPTS) the sole voice in determining how large-scale renewable energy projects will be assessed, as it takes away the ability for local authority to value real property, in such cases. Already, state law undermines local authority through 94-c. This proposal appears to be an egregious attempt at further government overreach.

This revision in industrial solar and wind assessment should be rejected.

Thank you for your consideration,

Joan McKiernan, 10 Deer Lake Road, Windsor, NY 13865

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