

1 **2025 NYSAC Legislative Conference**
2 **Standing Committee on Climate Action, Energy & Environment**
3 **Resolution #3**

4
5 **Resolution Urging the Adoption of Smart Renewable Energy Siting**
6 **Practices with Strong Local Input and Agricultural Protections**
7

8 **WHEREAS**, while the transition to clean energy is essential for reducing greenhouse
9 gas emissions and meeting New York's climate goals, the siting of renewable energy
10 facilities must be done thoughtfully to protect valuable farmland, natural resources, and
11 community interests; and

12
13 **WHEREAS**, local governments can provide critical insights into:

- 14 • Local agricultural resources, land use priorities, and community needs;
- 15 • Potential impacts on farming operations and food production;
- 16 • Infrastructure capacity and upgrade requirements;
- 17 • Environmental and cultural resources requiring protection; and
- 18 • Opportunities for development that benefit host communities; and

19
20 **WHEREAS**, the Renewable Action through Project Interconnection and Deployment
21 (RAPID) Act consolidated state control over renewable energy and transmission siting
22 while failing to establish local governments as full partners in planning and
23 implementation, specifically by:

- 24 • Granting ORES broad authority to override local zoning and planning regulations
25 without meaningful justification;
- 26 • Creating an imbalanced process that prioritizes speed over thorough local review
27 and community input; and
- 28 • Providing insufficient resources and technical assistance for municipalities to
29 properly evaluate complex project impacts; and

30
31 **WHEREAS**, strengthening local input, agricultural protections, and community
32 benefits in the renewable energy and electric transmission siting process would help
33 ensure renewable energy development proceeds in a way that maintains agricultural
34 viability, protects environmental resources, and builds public support for clean energy
35 projects.

36
37 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, NYSAC calls on the Governor, the
38 Legislature, and the Department of Public Service (DPS) to strengthen local control and
39 participation in the clean energy and electric transmission siting process by:

- 40 • Requiring early and meaningful engagement with local communities through
41 inclusive processes that offer opportunities for dialogue, negotiation, and
42 community input;
- 43 • Limiting ORES's authority to preempt local laws by requiring a higher burden of
44 proof to justify overriding local zoning and planning regulations and by
45 narrowing the definition of "unreasonably burdensome;"

- 1 • Ensuring that municipalities have adequate time, resources, and funding to
2 assess the potential impacts of proposed facilities and prepare comprehensive
3 compliance statements;
- 4 • Increasing funding for grants and technical assistance programs that support
5 local climate action and energy planning; and
- 6 • Mandating that utilities actively engage with local governments as full partners in
7 planning, developing, and implementing distribution system upgrades and clean
8 energy integration projects; and

9
10 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Governor Hochul, New York State Legislature,
11 and DPS agree to enhance agricultural and environmental protections by:

- 12 • Requiring all applicants for major renewable energy facility siting permits to
13 submit a completed smart solar siting scorecard as part of their application to
14 ensure consideration of agricultural, environmental, and community impacts;
- 15 • Broadening the definition of agrivoltaics so it is not limited to grazing but
16 includes a wider range of agricultural activities, such as crop production and
17 other forms of dual land use;
- 18 • Requiring the integration of pollinator-friendly vegetation varieties into project
19 designs, rather than only traditional lawn cover, to enhance biodiversity and
20 ecosystem services;
- 21 • Ensuring that mitigation payments for unavoidable impacts to agricultural land
22 are disbursed expeditiously to provide timely assistance for local agricultural and
23 farmland protection efforts;
- 24 • Providing for the appointment of an independent and qualified agricultural
25 monitor with an understanding of agricultural practices to oversee construction,
26 restoration, and follow-up monitoring for projects impacting agricultural land;
27 and
- 28 • Reinstate and reinforce the role of the Department of Agriculture and Markets in
29 overseeing the development of renewable energy and transmission projects, as
30 was the case under Article 10; and
- 31 • Requiring detailed decommissioning and site restoration plans that provide
32 sufficient financial security for all decommissioning costs and ensure impacted
33 agricultural land can return to its original state prior to construction; and

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35 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the State should enact legislation establishing an
36 extended producer responsibility program for solar and wind equipment to ensure
37 responsible end-of-life management; and

38
39 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, copies of this resolution be sent to the counties of
40 New York State encouraging member counties to enact similar resolutions; and

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42 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that copies of this resolution be transmitted to
43 Governor Kathy Hochul, the New York State Senate and Assembly, the Chair of the
44 Department of Public Service, the Executive Director of the Office of Renewable Energy
45 Siting, the Commissioner of New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets,
46 and all others deemed necessary and proper.