



# South Ripley Solar Project

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**PRELIMINARY SCOPING  
STATEMENT SUBMITTAL  
AND PROJECT UPDATE**



# Purpose

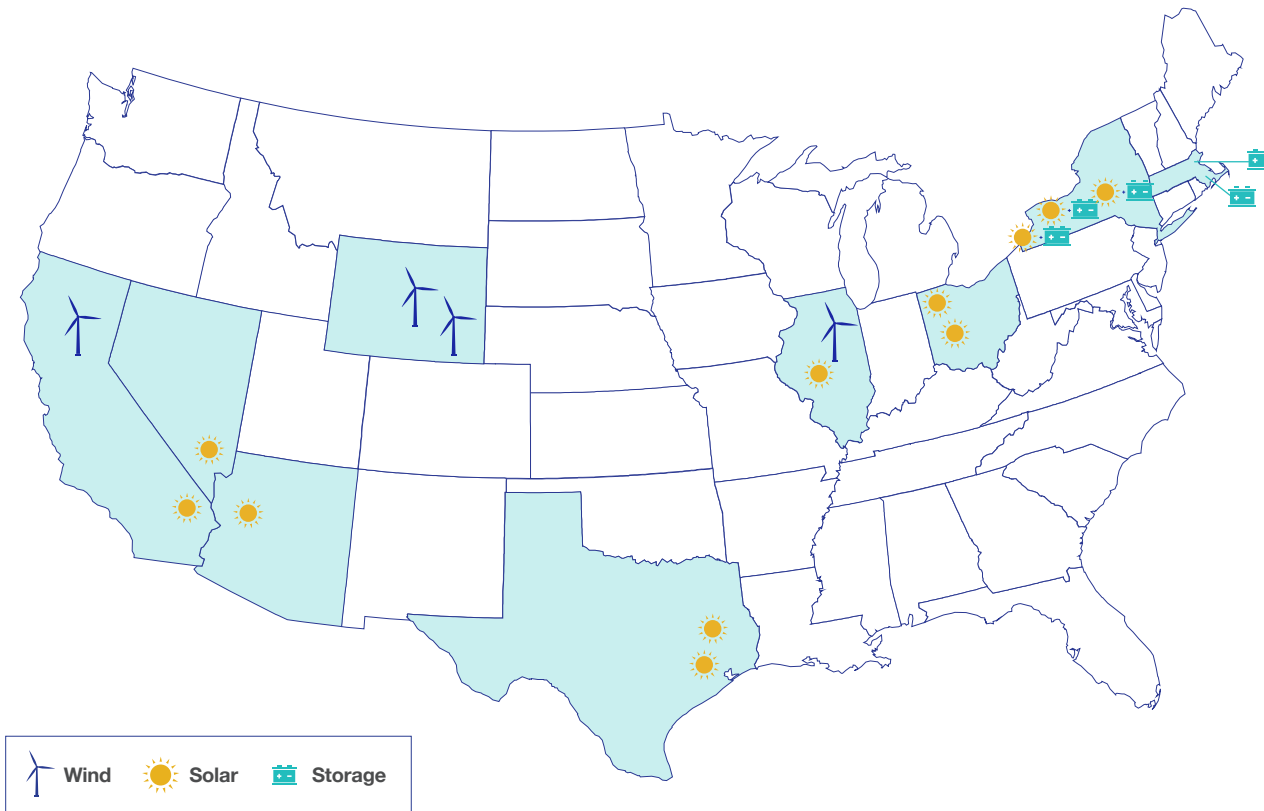


The purpose of this document is to notify the Ripley community that the South Ripley Solar Project submitted its Preliminary Scoping Statement (PSS) on May 22, 2020 and to provide details regarding the information included in the PSS and how you, as a local stakeholder, can get involved in the review process.

Given current COVID-19 concerns, ConnectGen is not able to safely hold a public open house meeting at this time. This mailer contains the information that you would receive at a public open house, and our Project team is available to provide additional information or context as needed. ConnectGen intends to hold future public open house meetings once it is deemed safe to do so and as the Project progresses.

Please submit any questions through the Project website at [www.southripleysolar.com](http://www.southripleysolar.com) or call **1-800-338-8905** to speak to a Project team member. If we do not answer the phone, please leave a detailed message so our team can promptly return your call.

# About ConnectGen



**Founded in 2018, ConnectGen is an independent renewable energy company focused on the development of high quality wind, solar, and energy storage projects across North America.**

**Based in Houston, Texas, our experienced team has developed, built and operated thousands of megawatts across North America.**



ConnectGen is a subsidiary of 547 Energy, Quantum Energy Partners' clean energy platform company.



Founded in 1998, Quantum Energy Partners is a leading provider of private equity capital to the global energy industry, having managed together with its affiliates more than \$15 billion in equity commitments since inception.

# Project Overview



**Project Owner:**  
ConnectGen Chautauqua  
County LLC

**Host Community:**  
South Ripley, within the Ripley  
town boundaries

**Renewable Resource:**  
Solar energy

**Projected Capacity:**  
Up to 270 MWac

**New York Homes Powered:**  
Up to 67,000

**Projected Land Use:**  
Up to 2,000 acres

**Projected Completion Date:**  
End of 2023

**Point of Interconnection:**  
South Ripley 230 kV  
Substation

**Energy Storage:**  
20 MWac battery energy  
storage component



# Project Benefits

## DIRECT BENEFITS:



Over **\$18 million** in increased revenue to the Town of Ripley, Chautauqua County, and the Sherman and Ripley school districts during the life of the Project



Up to **220 jobs** anticipated during the peak of construction



Up to **\$40 million dollars in payments to local landowners** in the form of solar leases, easement agreements, and good neighbor agreements through the life of the Project

## INDIRECT BENEFITS:



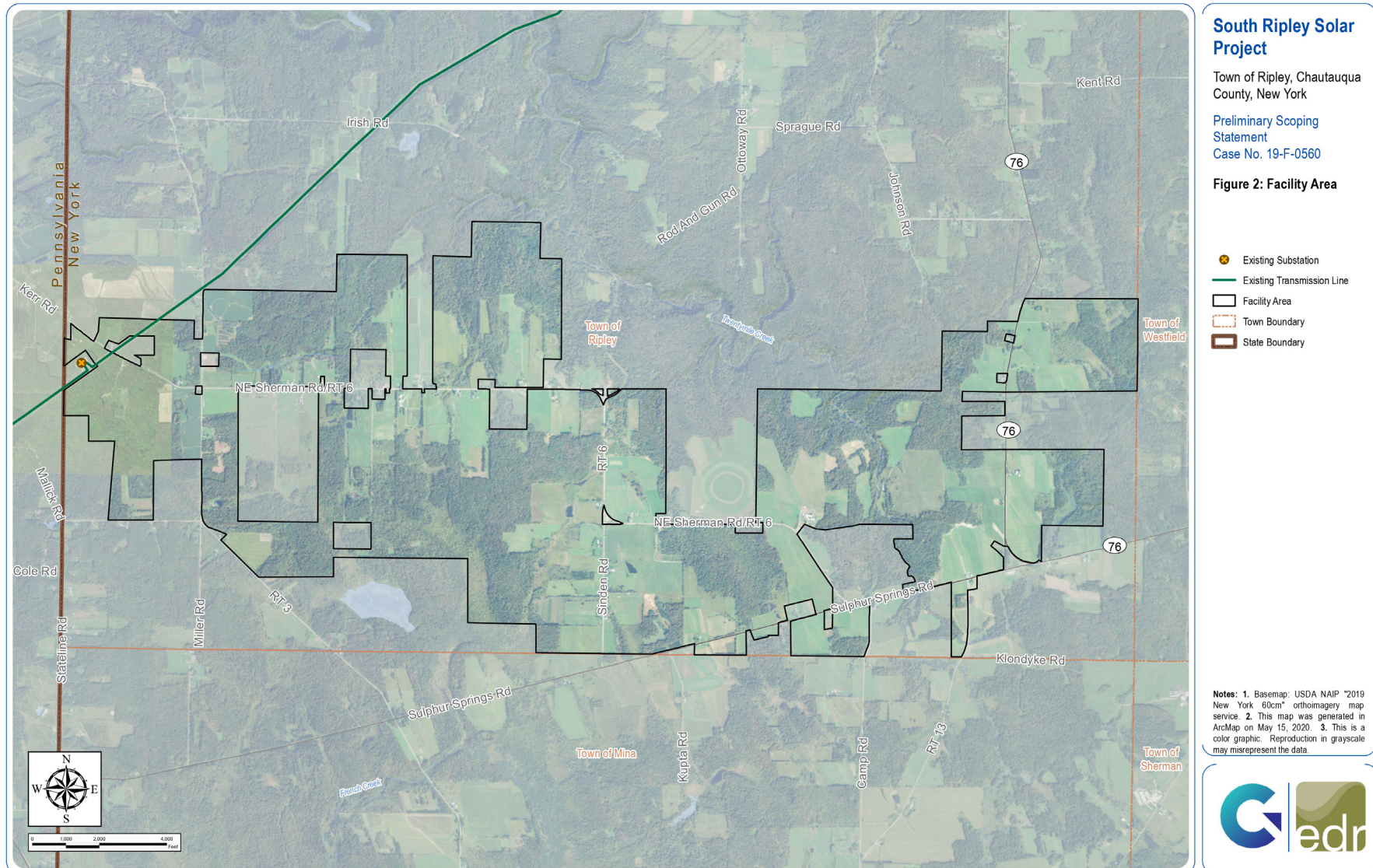
Revenue to local shops, hotels, restaurants, service and construction material suppliers during construction and operation



Partnerships with local community groups, local sponsorships, and donations

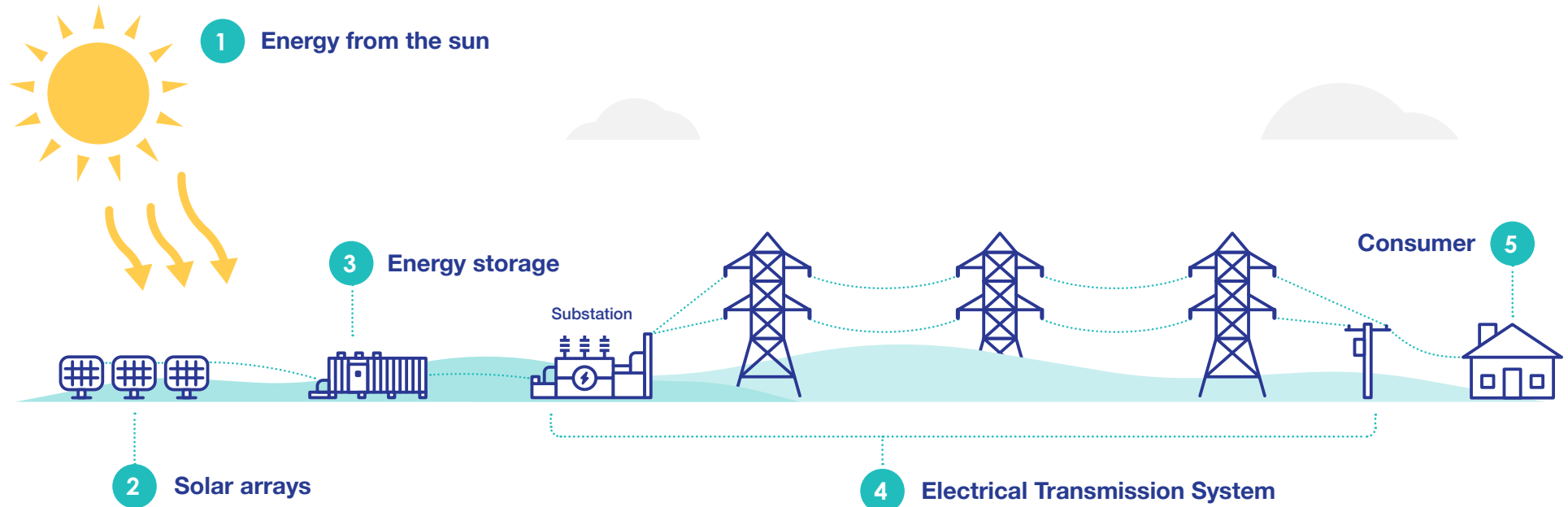
# Potential Facility Area

Map shows potential participating parcels. Not all parcels within map boundaries will participate, and solar panels will not be installed over the full area. Final Facility maps will be available once ConnectGen files its Project Application in accordance with the New York State permitting process.





# How Does Paired Solar and Energy Storage Work?



**1** Energy from the sun falls onto the earth's surface each day in the form of sunlight. The sunlight is absorbed by the solar panels, converting it into electricity.

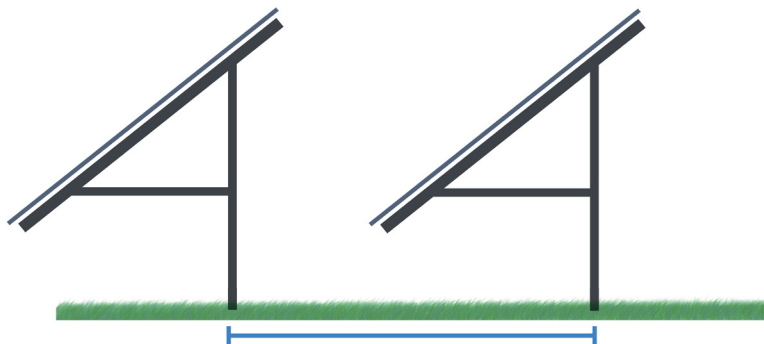
**2** The absorbed sunlight is transformed into usable energy by way of an inverter that turns direct current (DC) energy into alternating current (AC) electricity. AC is the form of power used in homes and businesses.

**3** Energy storage in the form of batteries allows projects to store electricity produced by the solar arrays and use it when the electric grid needs it most.

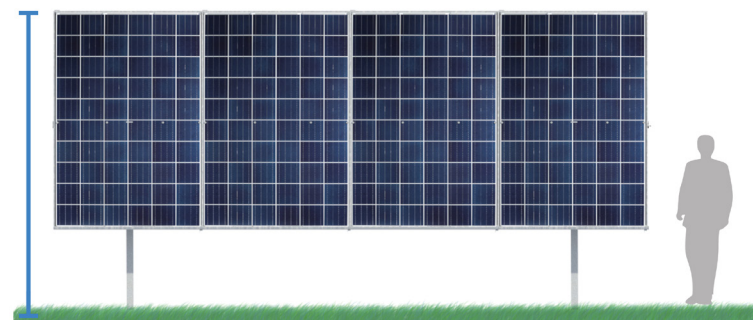
**4** Electricity generated travels through transmission/distribution lines to homes and businesses.

**5** Electricity produced by solar can then be used by the consumer.

# The Basics of Solar



Typical Solar Module Spacing: at least 12 feet



Typical Solar Module Height: 12 feet

## Solar panels are safe

- Photovoltaic (PV) panels must meet strict electrical safety standards
- PV panels are designed to ensure no release or leakage of panel material into the surrounding environment
- PV panel arrays are fenced to ensure safety and security

## Solar panels produce minimal glare

- PV panels are designed to absorb light, not reflect light, and therefore produce minimal glare

## Solar panels are quiet

- PV panels make little or no sound
- Associated electrical equipment creates minimal sound
- Limited required equipment maintenance such as mowing or access road upkeep would be conducted periodically during the day

## Solar panels do not pollute

- PV panels produce no combustion, emissions, or odors
- PV panels result in no water discharges or use of neighboring water bodies for heating or cooling



# Energy Storage

**The Project is anticipated to include 20 megawatts (MW) of energy storage in the form of batteries near the South Ripley Substation**

## **WHAT BENEFITS DOES ENERGY STORAGE BRING?**

- Energy storage allows the Project to save energy during low load times and discharge onto the grid when people need power.

## **WHAT TECHNOLOGY IS USED?**

- Most large-scale energy storage projects utilize lithium-ion batteries – the same technology used in electric vehicles and medical equipment.
- ConnectGen will continue to evaluate the best technologies for the South Ripley Solar Project.

## **WHAT DO THESE BATTERIES LOOK LIKE?**

- Batteries are typically installed in 40 ft x 8 ft enclosures, similar to shipping containers.
- The total footprint of the energy storage system is expected to be less than 1 acre.

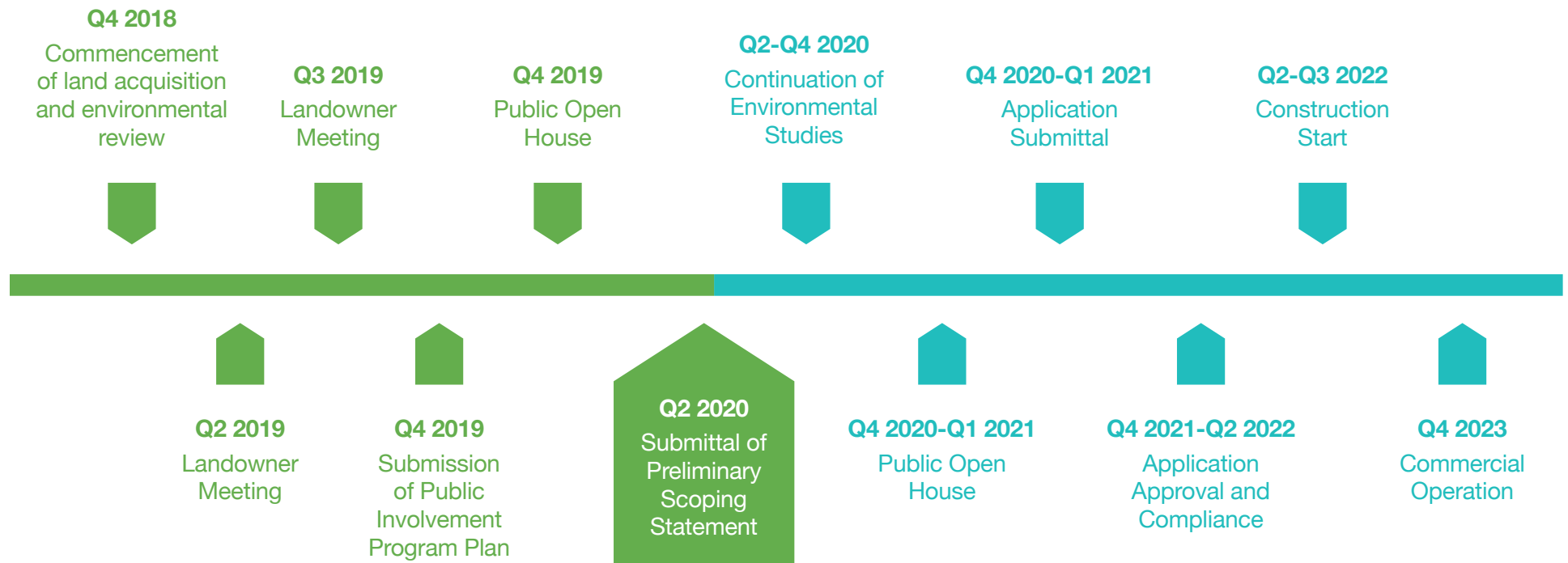


*Aerial view of KCE NY 1 located in Saratoga County, NY. Photo courtesy of Key Capture Energy.*

# Anticipated Project Timeline



- ConnectGen has worked since late 2018 to introduce the Project to the local Ripley community, perform initial environmental analyses, and progress through the early stages of the state permitting process
- Through 2020, ConnectGen will perform and complete a wide range of environmental and technical studies to prepare for the submittal of a formal Application through the state permitting process
- ConnectGen expects to commence construction on the Project in Q2 or Q3 of 2022, with commercial operation starting by the end of 2023



CONTINUED PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT LIFE



# New York State Permitting Process

**New York State requires that major electric generation facilities (25 MW or more), including solar projects, undergo a rigorous state permitting process, prior to construction and operation.**

The South Ripley Solar Project is currently progressing under Article 10, which requires the New York State Board on Electric Generation Siting and the Environment (Siting Board) to issue a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need (Certificate) authorizing the construction and operation of major electric generating facilities.

For more information on the New York State permitting process, visit the New York State Department of Public Service's Siting Board home page:

**[www3.dps.ny.gov](http://www3.dps.ny.gov)** (see Featured Pages in the footer on the DPS website)



**Under the New York State permitting process, utility scale solar developers are required to:**

- **Solicit extensive public input**
- **Engage a wide range of local stakeholders**
- **Evaluate environmental, public health, economic benefits and public safety impacts of development**
- **Establish comprehensive strategies for safe operation, project maintenance, and end of life decommissioning**

# Public Involvement Program Plan (PIP)



**On October 30, 2019, ConnectGen filed the Project's Public Involvement Program (PIP). The PIP identifies the project's stakeholders, the methods by which stakeholders will be notified and consulted throughout the Article 10 process, and activities ConnectGen will engage in to encourage stakeholder participation. ConnectGen's goal is to provide information to stakeholders, understand stakeholder interests, identify any additional stakeholders potentially affected by the South Ripley Solar Project, solicit information from stakeholders during public outreach events and generally foster public participation in the Project review process.**

In addition to the public engagement performed under the PIP, ConnectGen understands from firsthand experience that it is essential to be an active part of the communities in which we work. We are pleased to have supported the following organizations in the Town of Ripley and Chautauqua County:

- South Ripley Firehall Holiday Extravaganza
- Meeder's Restaurant COVID-19 Community Support
- Ripley Elementary School Table or Treat, and Student Work Showcase
- Findley Lake Harvest Festival
- Great Blue Heron Music Festival
- Main Street Pizza COVID-19 Community Support



*ConnectGen team members at the August 2019 landowner meeting*



# Preliminary Scoping Statement (PSS)



**On May 22, 2020, ConnectGen filed the Project's Preliminary Scoping Statement (PSS). The PSS provides a description of the proposed Project, potential environmental and health impacts, details the proposed studies that will be performed to evaluate potential impacts, and outlines the proposed mitigation measures and reasonable alternatives to the Project. The major components of the PSS include a discussion on:**

- Proposed facility and environmental setting
- Potential significant, adverse environmental and health impacts
- Proposed studies to evaluate potential adverse impacts
- Proposed measures to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts
- Proposed reasonable alternatives
- Proposed visual simulations to identify potential visual impacts
- Information regarding plans for decommissioning
- Proposed socioeconomic impact studies
- State and federal requirements

Stakeholders can find a copy of the PSS on the Project website at <https://www.southripleysolar.com/article-10-process/> or by visiting one of the local document repositories (see last slide for locations). There is a 21-day period for the public to comment on the PSS, and ConnectGen will have 21 days to respond to all comments received. Members of the public can submit comments by serving such comments on ConnectGen and filing a copy with the Secretary of the Siting Board at the addresses provided below.

ConnectGen LLC  
Attn: Isaac Phillips  
1001 McKinney Street, Ste. 700  
Houston, TX 77002  
Toll-Free Phone: (800) 338-8905  
Email: [info@southripleysolar.com](mailto:info@southripleysolar.com)

New York State Siting Board  
Honorable Michelle L. Phillips  
Secretary to the Commission  
NYS Public Service Commission  
Agency Building 3  
Albany, NY 12223-1350

# Intervenor Funding



**Through the state permitting process, ConnectGen will provide funds to encourage intervenor participation.**

**\$94,500**

**IS NOW  
AVAILABLE FOR  
INTERVENOR USE**

**\$1,000/MWac**

**WILL BE PROVIDED AT  
THE TIME THE OFFICIAL  
PROJECT APPLICATION  
IS FILED**

- Funds will be distributed to certain parties that make a request to cover expenses toward participating in the review and providing feedback on project materials.
- At least 50% of the funding is reserved for municipal stakeholders.

To learn more about intervenor funding, please visit the DPS website at [www3.dps.ny.gov](http://www3.dps.ny.gov).

ConnectGen is required to provide funds to be disbursed by the Siting Board to intervenors – qualified, locally affected parties and municipalities – to offset certain expenses they incur in participating in the state permitting process. This requirement was put in place to encourage early and effective public involvement.

Following the PSS filing, on May 27, 2020 the Hearing Examiner issued a notice of availability of pre-application intervenor funds. Initial requests for funding must be submitted within 30 days of the notice. Eligible municipal and local parties may file requests for funds with the Secretary of the Siting Board, submitting a copy to the Presiding Examiner and other parties to the proceeding. A pre-application meeting or conference call will be scheduled by the Hearing Examiner and will occur between 45 and 60 days after the filing of the PSS, and funds will be disbursed to parties if it is determined that the funds will be used to contribute to a complete record leading to an informed decision.

Once the application is submitted, an additional amount of intervenor funding will be made available for parties to participate in the Application and Hearings phases of the state permitting process. The Hearing Examiner will set a deadline for parties to request money and will hold a pre-hearing conference to discuss requests and award funds.

By law, 50% of the intervenor funds are reserved for use by municipalities.



# Public Health and Safety



**ConnectGen is committed first and foremost to public safety throughout the development, construction, and operation of the South Ripley Solar Project. ConnectGen will coordinate extensively with the local and county Fire Departments and Emergency Services to ensure the Project is designed safely and that a comprehensive Emergency Response Plan is put in place prior to operation to protect the community.**

## **SOLAR PANELS AND ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT**

- PV panels must meet strict electrical safety standards
- PV panels are designed to ensure no release or leakage of panel material into the surrounding environment
- Solar projects produce no fossil fuel combustion, emissions, or odors
- Solar projects result in no water discharges or use of neighboring water bodies for heating or cooling

## **BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE**

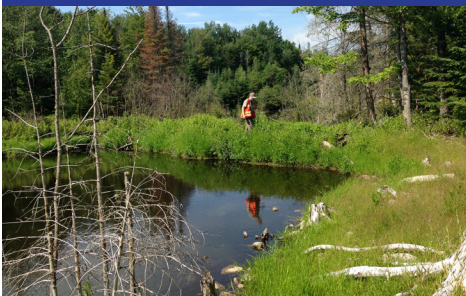
- Battery storage systems meet strict local, state, and federal electrical and fire safety standards
- Battery systems are designed to contain numerous redundant safety measures including 24/7 remote monitoring, internal heat sensors and electrical monitoring, built in exhaust and ventilation, and internal fire suppression systems



# Environmental Considerations

**ConnectGen will consult with many state and federal agencies and stakeholders, including: the NYS Department of Public Service, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, State Historic Preservation Office, local historical society, and planning/special interest groups to ensure that potential environmental impacts are fully considered. Studies to help avoid and minimize potential impacts include the following:**

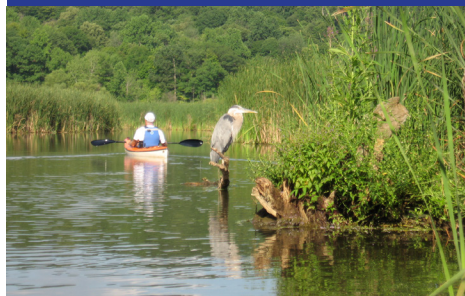
## WETLANDS



Review of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Wetland mapping

Field investigations to identify and delineate wetlands and streams

## RARE/THREATENED/ ENDANGERED SPECIES



Coordination with NYSDEC, USFWS, and natural resource management entities

Field investigations to identify potential habitats or species of concern

## ARCHAEOLOGY



Coordination with the New York State Historic Preservation Office, and regional advocacy groups

Research and field investigations to identify previously known or unidentified archeological sites

## HISTORIC PROPERTIES



Research, consultation with State Historic Preservation Office and regional historical groups

Evaluate historic properties to determine their eligibility for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places

Evaluate potential visual effect on historic properties



# Visual Impact Assessment

**ConnectGen has initiated the process of conducting a visual impact analysis to assure that potential visual impacts from the Project are minimized through a variety of screening practices. The assessment includes:**

- Coordination with local stakeholders to identify visually sensitive areas
- Visual simulations of the Project overlaid on high resolution Project-specific photography from representative viewpoints
- Development of minimization recommendations and designs such as vegetation screening, fencing, and setbacks to avoid, minimize, or mitigate visual effects



## STATE PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS

- Identification of visually sensitive resources, including recreational areas, residences, businesses, historic sites and scenic byways (interstate and other highway users), as well as specific locations identified by municipal planning representatives and relevant state agencies
- An evaluation of potential Project visibility through a viewshed analysis
- Visual simulations of the Project from representative views
- An assessment of the potential visual impacts associated with the Project and a description of the visual resources potentially affected
- A description of proposed measures that may be implemented to avoid, minimize, or mitigate visual effects

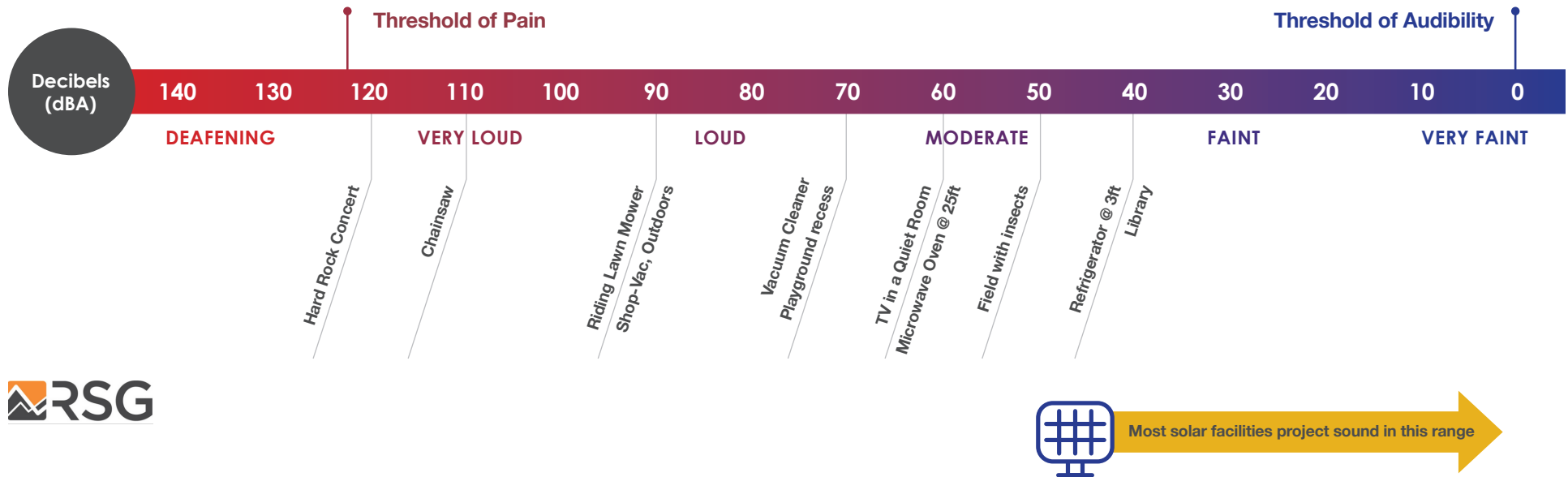
## WHO IS CONDUCTING THE STUDY?

- Environmental Design and Research (EDR) has been retained to conduct the visual study
- EDR is a leading firm in environmental impact analysis of renewable energy projects in the New York SEQRA and Article 10 processes

# Noise and Acoustics

## NOISE AND ACOUSTICS

- Average measured winter background sound in South Ripley is 37 dBA at night, 42 dBA during the day
- Typical solar projects are sited such that noise levels do not exceed 45 dBA at the nearest non-participating residence



## THE EQUIPMENT ANTICIPATED TO BE USED IN THE SOUTH RIPLEY SOLAR PROJECT INCLUDE:

Solar Panels	Collect solar energy and transform into electricity	Not expected to generate any sound
Inverters	Convert DC to AC current	Generate some sound during the day
Transformers	Increase the voltage for collection and distribution	Generate some sound day and night
Tracking Motors*	Tilt the panels toward the sun	Minor source of sound during the day
Energy Storage	Stores and releases power as needed	Generate sound mostly via the cooling systems

\*ConnectGen is currently evaluating the project both with and without tracking motors. Any noise study or modelling will utilize the anticipated site layout with equipment defined.

# Noise Impact Assessment

**ConnectGen is in the process of conducting a noise impact assessment. The assessment includes:**

- Background sound monitoring to assess existing sound levels throughout the Project area
- Sound propagation modeling to project future sound levels from the Project through the surrounding area
- Development of mitigation recommendations to ensure that the Project meets applicable sound limits



*Photograph from Background Sound Monitoring Station in South Ripley during the Winter*

## STATE PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS

- Evaluation of pre-construction sound levels, future sound levels, prominent discrete tones, and construction noise
- An evaluation of potential indoor and outdoor impacts from sound generated by the Project
- Mitigation measures designed to meet any local requirements and sound design goals for the facility at residences, outdoor public facilities and areas, other noise-sensitive receptors, and representative external property boundary lines of the Project

## WHO IS CONDUCTING THE STUDY?

- Resource Systems Group (RSG) has been retained to conduct the noise study
- RSG is a leading firm in the field of noise from renewable energy facilities
- RSG is a member of the National Council of Acoustical Consultants and consultants working on this Project are Board Certified through the Institute of Noise Control Engineering



# Other Project Considerations Identified in the PSS



In addition to the environmental impact analyses discussed in previous slides, the PSS outlines a wide range of design considerations, technical studies, impact analyses, and management plans that ConnectGen will develop for the Application. These include, but are not limited to:



**Design Drawings** – Preliminary Design Drawings will depict the approximate location of all proposed Project components and anticipated construction staging/material laydown areas and areas of disturbance.



**Effect on Transportation** – An analysis of the suitability of, and potential impacts to, the transportation networks to be used in the construction and operation of the Project.



**Socioeconomic Effect** – A Socioeconomic Report that quantifies the potential countywide and statewide socioeconomic impacts of the Project based on current socioeconomic conditions of the area.



**Site Restoration and Decommissioning Plan** – A Site Restoration and Decommissioning Plan requiring/outlining commitments for equipment removal, recycling and disposal considerations, and financial aid commitments.



**Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan** – A comprehensive stormwater management plan providing information on construction erosion and sediment control measures, post-construction erosion and sediment control measures (vegetative and structural), and anticipated stormwater management practices that will be used to reduce the rate and volume of stormwater runoff after construction has been completed.



**Electric and Magnetic Fields** – An EMF study that models the strength and locations of EMFs that will be generated by the Project.

# Application

Once ConnectGen has completed all environmental and technical studies identified in the PSS, the company will file an Application for Certification of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need. ConnectGen currently anticipates filing the Application in late 2020 or early 2021. The Application must include major Project information including but not limited to:

- *A Project description and design specifications including a preliminary Project layout*
- *A summary of all public involvement activity*
- *Evaluation of expected environmental and health impacts, environmental justice issues, and reasonable alternatives*
- *Project and community safety plans*

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Following the Application submittal, the Siting Board will set a schedule for public hearings and review of the Application materials. This review process often takes at least twelve months after the Application has been filed.

**Siting Board Decision:** The Siting Board must make explicit findings about the nature of the environmental impacts related to construction and operation of the Project and related facilities. Specifically, the Board will consider impacts and benefits to:

- *Statewide electrical capacity*
- *Ecology, air, ground and surface water, wildlife, and habitat*
- *Public health and safety*
- *Cultural, historical, and recreational resources*
- *Transportation, communication, utilities, etc.*
- *Cumulative emissions on the local community according to environmental justice regulations*

**The Siting Board must determine that the Project is a “beneficial addition or substitute for” generation capacity, that construction and operation are in the public interest, that adverse environmental effects will be minimized or avoided, and that the Project is in compliance with state laws and regulations.**



# How can you get involved?

## South Ripley Solar Project Contact:

Isaac Phillips  
Development Associate  
ConnectGen LLC

(800) 338-8905  
[www.SouthRipleySolar.com](http://www.SouthRipleySolar.com)  
[info@SouthRipleySolar.com](mailto:info@SouthRipleySolar.com)

## DPS Public Information Coordinator:

James Denn, Public Information Coordinator  
NYS Department of Public Service  
3 Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223-1350  
(518) 474-7080  
[James.Denn@dps.ny.gov](mailto:James.Denn@dps.ny.gov)

## State DMM:

<https://tinyurl.com/south-ripley-article-10>; Case Number: 19-F-0560

## Local Document Repositories:



### Ripley Town Clerk's Office

14 North State Street  
Ripley, NY 14775



### Ripley Library

64 Main Street  
Ripley, New York 14775



### Minerva Free Library

116 Miller Street  
Sherman, NY 14781

## Local Business Opportunities

We are in the process of identifying qualified local and regional businesses that could assist with the development, construction and maintenance of the South Ripley Solar Project. Please visit [www.southripleysolar.com/local-business-opportunities](http://www.southripleysolar.com/local-business-opportunities) to see a list of business opportunities and to help us understand your business capabilities. We look forward to hearing from you.