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## Hinsdale, N.H., project could be largest in Granite State

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By **Bob Audette**, [raudette@reformer.com](mailto:raudette@reformer.com)

HINSDALE, N.H. — The largest solar array in the state of New Hampshire has received a nod of approval from the Hinsdale Board of Selectmen.

"After meeting with representatives of Chariot Solar, LLC ("Chariot Solar") several times regarding the proposed up-to 65 megawatt ("MW") solar electric generation project in the Town of Hinsdale (known as the "Chariot Solar Project"), the Hinsdale Board of Selectmen has voted to support the Project," wrote Wayne Gallagher, the chairman of the Hinsdale Board of Selectmen, in a letter to Pamela G. Monroe, administrator of the New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee.

The Board of Selectmen voted Monday night to support the project.

"We are excited to be developing this project in Hinsdale," stated Ranger's Senior Vice President, Paul Harris, in a press release. "Chariot Solar will generate clean, renewable power that will help New Englanders save money on their power bills. We share New Hampshire's commitment to socially and environmentally responsible economic growth and we're proud to be making this long-term commitment to the state's clean energy economy."

"This is a wonderful opportunity for the town and for the state of New Hampshire," stated Hinsdale resident Smokey Smith, one of the landowners participating in the project. "Chariot Solar will help establish Hinsdale as a clean energy leader, not just regionally, but nationally."

In the letter to the Site Evaluation Committee, the board listed a number of reasons why they support the project.

The proposed site is land that is primarily zoned as industrial and is located adjacent to existing electrical infrastructure and will have limited off-site visibility. In addition, Chariot Solar has designed the Project to avoid sensitive natural resources, including wetlands, sensitive habitat, streams, and vernal pools.

Gallagher also noted that Chariot Solar has communicated with town officials, board, project abutters, and citizens in a transparent and proactive manner beyond any legal requirements.

"The Project will provide a substantial economic benefit to the taxpayers of Hinsdale through a Payment-in-Lieu-of-Tax ("PILOT") Agreement and through the increased tax revenue from land coming out of current use," Gallagher wrote. "The Project is consistent with the town's economic development priorities."

Another benefit of the project will be a diversification of the regional electric grid, a reduction of regional dependence of fossil fuels, the lowering and stabilization of future energy costs, and a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and other harmful pollutants to improve air quality and public health, helping to mitigate the risks of climate change.

The PILOT agreement provides more than \$10 million in revenue to the town within the first 20 years of project operation, which can be used for new roads, bridges, schools or offsetting local residents' taxes, states a press release from Ranger Solar.

In addition, notes the press release, the project will create approximately 185 jobs during the construction phase and three to six full-time jobs once operational.

"The Chariot Solar project will also generate enough clean energy to power tens of thousands of New England homes and businesses," states the release. "Over just 20 years, the project will also offset over 500,000 metric tons of (carbon dioxide) emissions, which is equivalent to the (carbon dioxide) emissions from 56,261,956 gallons of gasoline consumed."

The proposed project will be built on private land and will connect to existing electrical infrastructure.

"Ranger Solar is committed to developing the project efficiently, safely, and without undue adverse impacts to the environment. Ranger has been conducting environmental and cultural resource studies over the last eight months," states the release. "The project will be constructed in a manner that avoids sensitive resources. Further, the nature of the site and screening the perimeter of the project, where necessary, will minimize the visual impact to the surrounding community."

After the useful life of the project, the project will be fully decommissioned and the property restored.

New Hampshire's Site Evaluation Committee has jurisdiction over permitting the project. An application will be filed with the SEC this spring.

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According to the press release, the cost of solar energy has dropped about 76 percent since 2006, making it cost competitive with traditional fossil fuel energy sources.