



# Community Engagement Plan

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## Introduction

The Moraine Solar project is proud to operate in a state that places paramount importance on climate and communities. Throughout the life of the Moraine Solar project, the project team will set goals and act within the guidelines of New York’s nation-leading climate legislation, the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA), including delivering benefits to disadvantaged communities. The outcomes envisioned by this Community Engagement Plan offer a thoughtful approach to building community support while respectfully responding to interests throughout the project.

Moraine Solar recognizes and appreciates that local governments and stakeholders including landowners, play an important role in the process of evaluating and advancing large scale renewable siting in New York State, and in shaping developments that may be permitted in their communities. Moraine Solar asserts responsibility for implementing the following Community Engagement Plan, that supports an open and inclusive public process and encourages feedback throughout the development and construction of the proposed solar project.

This includes regionally targeted education and information campaigns and encourages an open exchange with residents, businesses and community groups where our projects are located. Throughout the development, construction, and operational phases of the proposed facilities, Moraine Solar’s efforts to understand and embrace local priorities and interests will ensure that the benefits that Moraine Solar provides, economic or otherwise, are aligned with community needs.

The following plan incorporates an understanding of local interests and concerns, provides valuable public education opportunities, demonstrates a commitment to partnering with host communities, and details a plan to respectfully respond to interests and prompt input from the public and affected agencies.

## 1. Local Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJ)

<b>Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJ)</b>	Town of Burns <u>Town of Burns Highway Department</u> <u>Allegany County Highway Department</u>
<b>Taxing School District</b>	Canaseraga Central School District
<b>Local Elected Officials Name(s), Contact Information, and Tenure</b>	Dianne Friener Supervisor Town of Burns <a href="mailto:Supervisor@townofburnsnyc.com">Supervisor@townofburnsnyc.com</a> 607-545-6509

### Alignment to Comprehensive Planning Efforts

In 2014, the town of Burns adopted an updated Comprehensive Plan to outline future goals and directions of the local community. Moraine Solar Energy Center is proud to align with the comprehensive plan through assisting to preserve local historical monuments such as the cemetery and jailhouse through charitable donations, as well as providing much needed revenue streams to stabilize infrastructure resources such as roads for local tourism sources like ski resorts. Moving forward, Moraine Solar will continue to align with the comprehensive plan to guide partnerships and donations in meaningful ways to the local community.

## 2. Community Outreach Strategies and Activities to Date



**Overview of Commitment To Clean Energy Development:** Moraine Solar recognizes that grid-scale solar projects are a relatively new concept throughout the state of New York, and is committed to educating local officials, landowners, neighbors, and the community at large about the technology, impacts, and benefits of solar energy. Through its efforts in following the Article 10, Section 94-c, and Article 8 permitting processes, Moraine Solar has shown a commitment to engaging with its projects’ host community residents, neighbors, businesses, government leaders, and community groups to ensure an open exchange of ideas and transparency about the projects.

Often, a lack of information can create confusion about a project. By sharing project details, including mitigation measures and permitting constraints, more meaningful dialog can take place. More importantly, receiving input from the community early in the development cycle uncovers critical information that can be used to help craft a project in ways that help maximize support from the community-at-large. The exercise of sharing information, receiving, and responding to feedback helps to realize a project with the community in mind. Moraine Solar is actively committed to finding the best formats to communicate information with various stakeholders in the Burns community.

### **MORaine SOLAR COMMUNITY OVERVIEW**

Located in Western New York, Allegany County, the Moraine Community reflects that of several groups. Namely, the town of Burns sits along route 70, the major thoroughfare in the Southern Tier and Allegany Mountains, as well as surrounding the village of Canaseraga. Burns is agricultural and prioritizes its local hills and valleys, iconic to the local scenery. The Moraine Solar project touches one k-12 district, the Canaseraga Central School district. In addition, Moraine is near SUNY Geneseo, Alfred State and Alfred University, all of which Moraine Solar has established and will continue relations with.

Recognizing the deep historical attachment to the community that the town of Burns has, Moraine Solar has worked with the town of Burns and cemetery association to preserve historic cemeteries and a jailhouse, one of the oldest in the state.

### **Moraine Solar Outreach to Date**

The Moraine Solar Energy Center began in 2018 upon acquiring the project’s initial core landowners. Moraine Solar first met with the Burns Town Board Solar Committee in December of 2020 to present the project, share the potential site map, and other project information. Since then, Moraine has continued to develop strong community relationships throughout the project.

#### *Community Meetings Overview*

- September 1, 2021: Public Information Meeting
- April 28, 2021: Public Information Meeting
- April 27, 2021: Public Information Meeting
- April 11, 2019: Town of Burns Open House Community Meeting
- December 5, 2018: Town of Burns Open House Community Meeting

#### *Town Meetings Overview*

- June 26, 2024: Town of Burns Board Update
- November 8, 2023: Town of Burns Board Update
- February 8, 2023: Town of Burns Board Update
- September 14, 2022: Town of Burns Board Update
- September 13, 2022: Project Review with Fire Marshal
- May 4, 2022: Town of Burns Board Update

- April 6, 2022: Town of Burns Board Update
- March 1, 2022: Town of Burns Board Update
- February 28, 2022: Town of Burns Board Update
- January 11, 2022: Town of Burns Consultation on Local Law
- October 26, 2021: Town of Burns Consultation Meeting
- September 28, 2021: Town Consult on Proposed Land Use Development
- August 17, 2021: Town Superintendent and Fire Department Meeting
- July 21, 2021: Town of Burns Presentation
- May 13, 2021: DD Town of Burns Board Presentation
- January 14, 2021: Town of Burns Presentation
- December 16, 2020: Town of Burns Presentation
- December 10, 2020: Town of Burns Board Update

As mentioned previously, Moraine Solar initiated outreach and coordination with the local community in 2018. Moraine Solar conducted an open house style meeting in the Town of Burns on December 5, 2018, and on April 11, 2019. Following the transfer to Section 94-c, Moraine Solar hosted numerous public information meetings in accordance with 19 NYCRR §900-1.3(b). The first meetings were held on April 27 and April 28, 2021, and another was subsequently held on September 1, 2021. These meetings were held more than 60 days prior to Moraine Solar’s anticipated application filing date. Written notice of the public meetings was provided to all residents located within one mile of the Facility Site, ORES, and the applicable members of the state legislature no sooner than 30 days and no later than 14 days prior to the meetings in accordance with the publication requirements of 19 NYCRR §900-1.3(b). Also, in accordance with the regulations, notification of the meetings was posted in The Spectator (official Town newspaper) and The Hornell PennySaver (free publication).

The meetings were to educate the public about the proposed project, including the anticipated application date and information about the future availability of local agency account funds. Moraine Solar also provided information on topics of interest, such as information on solar photovoltaic technologies, environmental considerations for project development, details on the Section 94-c permit process, and how to contact the Applicant.

Historically, the Moraine Solar’s public involvement program plan for the Article 10 process, as well as Exhibit 2, Overview and Public Involvement of the Office of Renewable Energy Siting 94c siting process, can be found on NYS Department of Public Service Document Matter Master. Moraine Solar Energy Center Matter Number 22-000

Moraine Solar completed necessary permitting activities in 2021 and 2022 and received its determination of completeness from the Office of Renewable Energy Siting in May 2023, allowing for construction in late 2026-2027 and operations to begin by 2028.

During the operational phase of the project, relationships with the community are managed by Moraine Solar’s asset optimization team, local site manager, and land and community engagement team. The primary focus of these community relationships are educational and partnership opportunities, ensuring

the project is operating safely, and maintaining the requirements of our permits (for example vegetative buffering for visual impact). Refresher training for first responders and emergency personnel will be held as needed and opportunities for field trips or educational seminars are available for local students.

Overall, Moraine Solar is committed to a thorough community engagement program, listening to neighbors, and providing the information and resources necessary to help inform about solar energy and the project, so the project and its benefits are successfully integrated into the community for years to come.

### 3. Direct Benefits to the Community

The project team at Moraine Solar and many community members are excited to see the project be realized, as it will provide many benefits for the community, including:

- More than \$300,000 in new revenues on an average annual basis for the town, county and school districts.
- More than \$20 million over the 20 years of operation to participating landowners.
- \$47,000 per year in residential electricity bill credits (for the first 10 years of operation). This amounts to roughly \$45 per household in the town of Burns.
- \$10,000 annual Share the Sun Fund community benefit fund (life of the project) to help support local organizations, in addition to any host community agreements or PILOT payments
- Other benefits including 130 union jobs during construction and operation, and opportunities for material supply and services and opportunities for the hospitality sector.
- \$2,000 annual scholarships to the Canaseraga School District with for students interested to pursuing a post-secondary program in the trades or has a renewable energy component, with the option for a second-year renewal for the recipients
- Some of the above-mentioned investments are anticipated to benefit disadvantaged communities in the Western New York/Southern Tier region as well as the 40.2% of households in the town of Burns that fall within the 0-60% state income level threshold for disadvantaged community criteria.

The Moraine Solar project represents a significant investment in the local towns, county, and the state of New York. The project would rank among the largest, by investment, in the Town of Burns. The project also shows alignment with the CLCPA and this solicitation's stated prioritization of benefits, including job creation and support for disadvantaged communities. The project will help grow and support New York's burgeoning renewable energy supply chains and workforce.

In addition to the category of alignment with the CLCPA, investments in the community fall into three primary categories:

- *Job Creation*: Includes temporary construction jobs and long-term jobs for the life of the facility.
- *Contribution in Taxes and Revenues*: Includes income from PILOT's and/or Host Community Agreements, special district taxes, taxes on underlying land and agricultural exemption conversion penalties.

- *Direct Economic Benefits:* The initial spending on the construction and operation of the photovoltaic (PV) installation creates a second layer of impacts, referred to as “supply chain impacts” or “indirect impacts.” Indirect impacts during the construction period consist of the changes in inter-industry purchases resulting from the direct final demand changes and include construction spending on materials and PV equipment and other purchases of goods and offsite services. Focusing on local or in-state indirect benefits, we see the greatest impact to local markets occur in the hospitality, material supply, and construction services sectors.

### **Alignment with the CLCPA**

The Moraine Solar project contributes to New York State’s goal of 70% renewable energy by 2030, through reducing emissions associated with power production by providing a renewable energy resource. Moraine Solar commits to other goals of the CLCPA such as a Just Transition, by partnering with community organizations to offer localized benefits to the most vulnerable populations in project communities.

Moraine Solar’s efforts to bring clean energy to New York are not only aligned with the goals of the CLCPA, but also with NYSERDA’s five core mission outcomes which are greenhouse gas emissions reductions, driving steady and reliable procurements of renewable energy, driving energy efficiency and building decarbonization, building New York’s clean energy economy, and aligning infrastructure, investment, and energy system planning to create a resilient and distributed energy system.

To do its part in addressing the environmental justice aspects of the CLCPA, Moraine Solar will be investing the local community for workforce development, education, household energy efficiency and by responding to local community needs. This will be addressed further in the document in the Benefits to Disadvantaged Communities section.

To ensure benefits are integrated into the local community, Moraine Solar believes in creating longstanding partnerships with organizations like local school districts and higher education institutions, BOCES, community groups like Veterans of Foreign Wars or Boys/Girls Scouts, food pantries, county and regional program partners like workforce development boards and NYSERDA Clean Energy Community Coordinators or Clean Energy Hubs.

Looking at the larger picture of upstate New York, Moraine Solar will also have a positive impact on Upstate New York cities and regions, including Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse, and Western New York/Allegany Mountain area each of which include significant disadvantaged communities. Moraine Solar is helping to grow a connected and growing renewable energy supply chain in these cities, while developing a skilled local workforce and supporting New York’s nation-leading transition to a renewable energy future.

### **Economic Development/Local Job Creation: Moraine**

Allegany county has an unemployment rate of 4.10% as of April 2024. The job creation from Moraine project construction will continue to provide contracted work to local workforces for a secure timeline. The Moraine Solar Energy Center is proposed to contribute over 6 million in direct payments, averaging more than \$300 thousand per year, to the town of Burns, Allegheny County and Canaseraga Central school districts in the first 20 years of operation. This value includes PILOT and/or Host Community Agreements, special district taxes, taxes on underlying land, and agricultural exemption conversion penalties.

More than 130 union jobs will be created at the peak of construction, and 2 full-time, high-paying jobs for its operating life. In addition, this will provide much needed training opportunities, setting individuals up for a career in one of the fastest growing industries of the future.

Moraine Solar will make significant investments in workforce development in the local community, that will be discussed in greater detail in the following sections.

### **Contributions to local Revenues and Direct Economic Benefits**

While this Community Engagement Plan provides an overview of the significant localized contributions for the Moraine community, the economic benefits sections of this solicitation cover the direct benefits in detail. With a fervent commitment to its community, Moraine Solar exceeds the base level expectations of benefits a project can bring to a community through listening and responding to needs in real time and bringing the following programs to our communities.

- Share the Sun Fund - \$10,000/ annually for the life of the Moraine Solar project will be given to local organizations. The winners are selected after review of their applications by a local review committee for a truly locally driven process
- \$2,000 scholarships annually for students at Canaseraga school districts interested in renewable energy or the trades
- \$5,000 donation to the Cemetery Association in a direct response to the need for tree removal after a devastating storm.
- In person education and outreach events from arts festivals to environmental summits, to school homecomings and county fairs
- Partnerships with local unions such as IBEW, LiUNA and Operators
- Presentations, scholarships, and partnerships with renewable energy schools such as SUNY Geneseo and Alfred State
- Workforce Development offerings as an intro to solar with a virtual reality headset tour of a solar construction site and a two-part online training series with SUNY ESF

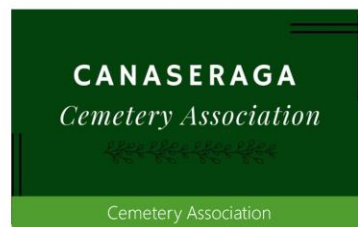
# Community Partnerships and Donations



Cinderella League



Town of Burns Historic Preservation



Cemetery Association

## 2021-2023

- \$3,000 **Cinderella League**– Girls Softball
- \$2,000 Town of Burns Historical Jail Revitalization Study
- \$15,000 **Town of Burns Historic Preservation** fund
- \$6,000 Scholarship – Canaseraga CSD
- \$3,500 American Legion Post – Upgrades
- \$2,500 Essential Club Free Library– ADA compliant ramp
- \$5,000 **Cemetery Association**– Tree removal
- \$1,000 Garwoods United Methodist Church – Upgrades

## 2024

- \$1,250 American Legion Post
- \$1,250 Essential Club Free Library
- \$3,425 **Cemetery Association**
- \$3,425 Marjorie Dieter Mastin Historical Society
- \$650 Garwoods United Methodist Church
- \$2,000 Scholarship – Canaseraga CSD
- On-going grant writer services for Lions Club

Please contact Drazen Gasic or Haylee Ferington with any community donation or partnership ideas!

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## 4. Benefits to Disadvantaged Communities

Recognizing most of the state’s utility scale renewable energy projects are in rural areas, Moraine Solar maintains the NYSERDA March 2023 definition of Disadvantaged communities to adequately address rural poverty, wherein households that fall within the state level threshold may be categorized as members of disadvantaged communities. In addition, recognizing regional impacts of any kind of development, Moraine Solar will work closely with county and regional organizations to create opportunities for nearby disadvantaged communities. Moraine Solar further recognizes some of the biggest burdens are local funding opportunities, workforce development and household energy efficiency.

According to the March 2023, NYSERDA DAC map and additional criteria, the Moraine Solar project would be nearby to a DAC in Mount Morris. Additionally, in the town of Burns, 40.2% of households fall within the 0%-60% state income level threshold to qualify as a disadvantaged community member. In Allegany County, 15% of the parcels fall within a disadvantaged community.

### Local Funding Opportunities

Moraine Solar Energy Center is dedicating \$10,000 for the life of the project beginning at the start of construction for the project’s Share the Sun Fund community benefit Fund. Often, local nonprofits have a hard time finding funding such as local food pantries and serve the members of communities who are most in need of assistance. Winners of these funds are chosen by a local selection committee.

A scholarship of \$2,000 has been established at Canaseraga Central School District, and we will be working with county workforce organizations and homeowner organizations to implement programs for disadvantaged communities both in project communities and counties. The project will also provide an

opportunity to source construction labor, materials, subcontractors, and vendors directly from this disadvantaged area.

### **Job Creation and Workforce Development**

The Moraine Solar Energy Center will bring much-needed job opportunities not only to the host town, but also to neighboring disadvantaged communities. Construction jobs will offer prevailing wages, hands-on learning, and serve as a starting point to gain relevant knowledge and experience in the fast-growing energy industry. Full time operations jobs will pay an average of [16-19%](#) above the average state level, depending on the position.

There will be approximately 130 union jobs created at the peak of construction and 2 additional full-time, high paying operation jobs for the project's operating life. Tailoring to various job experience levels in the community, there will be jobs available such as laborers, technicians, electricians and construction workers. The Moraine Solar Energy Center will create opportunities in the energy sector, which is a growing field of work because of the state's rigorous renewable energy goals. From 2016 –2018, workforce growth in the energy industry was [8.9%](#) in New York State, which has positively contributed to growth for the economy. It is projected that in the next 10 years solar technician demand by [50%](#) in New York State. These jobs will provide much needed training opportunities, setting individuals up for a future career in an expanding industry.

While the direct contributions made by Moraine Road solar will focus on the projects host towns, school districts, and the county its proximity to Mount Morris will provide an opportunity to source hospitality, services, construction labor, and materials, subcontractors, and vendors from these recognized disadvantaged communities and community members.

Moraine Solar plans to promote workforce development to the disadvantaged communities and members of the project area, by cultivating career pathways in the solar industry. A New York State company, ExPR, offers a virtual reality headset tour of a solar construction field, while different careers in the solar industry are discussed, as well as showing a finalized site with sheep grazing. Moraine will offer this virtual reality tour to students at local high school and community colleges to introduce students to a two-part solar training series with SUNY ESF. Part-one serves as a four-week online training through Coursera, while part two is an in-person training session with a professor from SUNY ESF as well as local union partners. This two-part training series will introduce participants (high school through continuing education) to a variety of careers and career pathways in the solar industry. Moraine Solar will sponsor the cost of this program for participants and highlight our disadvantaged members to assist in the workforce leg of a Just Transition. Moraine Solar intends to distribute a flyer that highlights the opportunities to pursue a career in renewable energy and promotes the training opportunity as well. Moraine Solar will partner with local workforce development organizations, schools or libraries to offer access to computers and Wi-Fi to assist with equity considerations.

### **Energy Efficiency/Carbon Reductions**

In efforts to directly address several goals of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act at once, Moraine Solar will initiate an energy efficiency program for homeowners within the DAC income level threshold within the town of Burns. We seek to partner with the regional Clean Energy Hub,

responsible for household level energy efficiency measures. Households and vendors would be selected by the Clean Energy Hub as a trusted community partner. Upon receipt of a NYSERDA Tier 1 award, Moraine Solar is committed to investing \$94,000 into this program for households in the town of Burns. Should all eligible and interested households be funded in the town of Burns, any remaining funds are to be distributed in the nearest DAC, Mount Morris. Moraine Solar is proud of this program, to directly assist one of the biggest individual energy burdens and challenges of the CLCPA, in bringing energy efficiency to disadvantaged households in rural New York.

### **Local Educational Opportunities—Moraine**

The project will be able to provide well-paying jobs to locals who completed relevant educational programs. The State University of New York At Alfred (SUNY Alfred) is one nearby location where students are learning skills which could propel them into a career in renewable energy, and perhaps the Moraine Solar Energy Center. Working with this local institution can increase opportunities for underrepresented groups, where underrepresented groups make up at least 28% of the student body and 53% are Pell grant recipients.

## **5. Payments in Lieu of Taxes or Host Community Agreements**

The Proposer has actively addressed Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) and Host Community Agreements in various public meetings, including those held by the Town Board of Burns and the Allegany County Industrial Development Agency (IDA). Moraine Solar initiated discussions with the Allegany County IDA on October 17th, 2019, followed by subsequent meetings on February 18th, 2021, and December 22nd, 2023. We are eager to engage in negotiations regarding these agreements with the Town, County, schools, and IDA. At present, Moraine Solar is collaborating with the Town of Burns to finalize the host community agreement. Once this agreement is completed, Moraine Solar will resume discussions with the County IDA to implement the PILOT by the end of 2024. Moraine Solar is excited about the opportunity to generate new revenue streams for the Town, County, and school district, which could greatly benefit the community throughout the PILOT.

## **6. Local Interests/Concerns and Mitigation Efforts**

Moraine Solar has come to find there are two main factors that contribute toward building community support and responding to opposition:

- Providing education about the facility -a lack of information can cause confusion about the project. By sharing project details including mitigation measures and permitting constraints, more meaningful dialog can take place.
- Receiving feedback from the community – more importantly, receiving input from the community early in the development cycle allows for a mutually beneficial flow of information and ideas.

The exercise of sharing information, receiving and responding to feedback helps to realize a project with community in mind. Below are specific examples indicating of how informing stakeholders and/or receiving

feedback either influenced project decisions or helped build community support at the Moraine Solar Center:

Moraine Solar requested relief from Section 1 I(iii) in the Town of Burns Solar Energy Facility Regulation which requires the solar facility to maintain vegetation below 24-inches in height inside the solar field.

Moraine Solar requested relief from this provision as it may inter alia impact on the Facility's ability to provide agricultural co-utilization options.

The integration of solar grazing and bee keeping at Moraine Solar Energy Center has the potential to create additional value/revenue streams from locally raised, grass-fed solar lamb and solar honey that could be produced at the solar facility and sold to consumers in New York State (NYS). Moraine Solar heard from many farmers in the region, who have an interest in grazing sheep under solar panels confirming that solar grazing can be a real opportunity for Moraine Solar.

The local community also expressed an interest about how the project might benefit the local towns and schools, and its potential effect on taxes. The Project through the PILOT and/or Host Community Agreement, special district taxes, taxes on underlying land, agricultural exemption conversion penalties is proposed to contribute more than \$6 million in direct payments to the Town of Burns, Allegany County and Canaseraga Central school district in the first 20 years of operation. In addition, if the Project is awarded a contract with NYSERDA, a \$500/MW payment will be made annually to offset residential electricity bills for the first ten years following commercial operation amounting to \$47,000 per year, providing around a \$45 relief per household in the Town of Burns on annual electricity bills.

Moraine Solar believes it is a strong fit for the town of Burns' community because Moraine Solar has and will foster meaningful relationships that are built to last and be mutually beneficial.

## 7. Strategies to Mitigate Concerns Raised by the Public

### Visual Impact Concerns

Neighboring landowners can sometimes be concerned with visual impacts on their homes resulting from large-scale solar projects. Moraine Solar team members focus on meaningful consultation with project neighbors, intended to foster long-lasting relationships with those living closest to its facilities. Through meetings that may take place at the neighbor's home, Moraine Solar team members work to find common ground through deep listening and compassionate problem solving. Some potential tools to assist in this dialogue can be visual representations of the project using real-time photos of the land in discussion, and unique setback and tree-planting opportunities.

### Concerns at Moraine Solar

- **Several concerns raised over potential chemical runoff from solar panels.** Moraine Solar is proud to employ technologies that do not pollute the ground or waterways. Through state 94c permitting, the facility site could have increased groundwater filtration and retention and carbon sequestration.
- **Concerns regarding direct impacts from the project to local wetlands and indirect impacts to local waterbodies due to increased drainage.** Moraine Solar conducted a comprehensive

delineation of all federal, State, and locally regulated wetlands and adjacent areas in the 1,603acre Survey Area Pursuant to 19 NYCRR § 900-1.3(e),

- **Some concerns about the safe disposal or recycling of panels, or their chemical and metal components, at the time of decommissioning.** Moraine Solar will adhere to the state 94c permitting decommissioning guidelines and seek to recycle panels whenever possible in accordance with industry standard.

### General Education of Municipal Officials and Residents

As mentioned, to address municipal assistance, Moraine Solar commits to an ESCROW account, so municipalities may hire consultants and legal staff so they may be properly educated on the solar project, but not at expense of the local taxpayer. In addition, Moraine Solar will take municipalities on bus tours of existing and in construction project sites, provide trainings, and have in depth conversations with subject matter experts and agency representatives at the request and need of host municipalities to ensure all needs and questions are met.

### Co-Location Opportunities and Challenges

Moraine Solar supports opportunities for the integration of agricultural activities including agricultural coproduction, pollinator support, and native habitat support at their large-scale ground-mounted solar projects included in this bid submission.

Large-scale solar developments tend to seek out land that is relatively flat, free of existing obstructions, and are limited in the negative impacts imposed on natural heritage features (i.e. wetlands). Due to this economic design preference, solar developments and agricultural land tend to overlap. It is a common misconception that it is an either/or option. Solar development and agricultural endeavors can be integrated in a successful and meaningful way.

## 8. Feedback from the Community

### Virtual Meetings and Podcasts

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Moraine Solar needed to adapt its community outreach strategy to continue the important work of informing communities during challenging times when it was not possible to meet in public gatherings. The solution was to hold virtual community meetings where developers and experts shared updates on project development, studies conducted, land acquisition, our conversations with state and local officials, other consultations, and the Article 10 / Section 94-c permitting processes, including the anticipated application date and information regarding the future availability of local agency and community intervenor funds.

In another effort to make different types of media available to reach out to as many people in the community as possible, Moraine Solar developed a podcast series focused on educating the public about solar projects in development across New York state<sup>1</sup>. The podcasts explain the project background and benefits, answer frequently asked questions, and detail the importance of reaching out to the community and building grassroots support. They include interviews with landowners, beekeepers and farmers grazing sheep, project developers, and energy storage safety experts. The podcasts are available on most popular

podcast platforms<sup>1</sup> and also advertised on the radio in the local markets and on the radio station's websites.<sup>2</sup> Other podcasts are available on project websites, including for the Moraine Solar project.<sup>3</sup> When awarded a contract with NYSERDA, Moraine Solar will develop a new podcast focused directly on the positive impact to the community, featuring interviews with landowners, environmental groups, local businesses and other stakeholders.

### **Feedback Opportunities**

Moraine Solar understands the importance of building lasting meaningful relationships with the local communities in which their projects are located. Moraine Solar uses a project website to easily share project details and other information like FAQs with the local community or any other person interested. The website includes permitting information and multimedia experiences. The Moraine Solar Project can be found at <https://www.edf-re.com/project/moraine-solar/about/>

## **9. Forthcoming Community Outreach Strategies and Activities**

Recognizing Moraine Solar could be nearing the construction phase of its life, should a NYSERDA Tier 1 contract be awarded, future outreach strategies will involve keeping the community and municipality involved and informed of processes moving ahead, as well as continued conversations and feedback loops finalizing project designs to continue to integrate project into fabric of community.

Leading up to construction, Moraine Solar will engage with the local community to provide a booklet of local services and hospitality businesses to distribute to the hundreds of construction workers who will work in the area for many months. This booklet will help to promote local businesses across Allegheny County to maximize opportunities to support the local economy. When we consider the potential impact across a variety of sectors and businesses the collective impact is great.

Finally, through a combination of podcasts, webinars, mailers, public meetings, website updates or one on one conversations, the Project team will continue to communicate relevant information and collect meaningful feedback from all stakeholders to better integrate the Project within the community.

### **Community Opportunities/Capacity Building**

Moraine Solar recognizes the importance of building community opportunities and capacity during the development, construction, and operation of the project and will continue in many of our engagement and outreach efforts as listed below:

- \$10,000 Share the Sun Fund, community grant program with selections by local committee (for the life of the project)
- Annual \$2,000 scholarships annually to students from Canaseraga Central Schools (for ten years)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/edf-renewables-solar-podcast/id1533678839>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.wxhc.com/three-landowners-discuss-why-they-lease-their-land-episode-one/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.edf-re.com/project/moraine-solar/resources/>

- \$94,000 one-time payment for energy efficiency upgrades for disadvantaged households in the town of Burns
- Workforce development bringing virtual reality tour and a two-part training series to project communities in partnership with SUNY ESF and local unions
- Continued conversations and trainings surrounding agrivoltaics and sheep grazing at the Moraine Solar site
- Continued work with SUNY Geneseo, Alfred State and Alfred University to create academic partnerships and research opportunities at Moraine Solar Center

Moraine Solar realizes community engagement is an iterative and long-lasting process and thusly cannot put an end date on our community engagement plan as conversations, partnerships and outreach will continue so long as the Moraine Solar Energy Center is in development and operation. Further, we recognize despite every effort to solicit feedback from the local community, there may be voices we have missed and encourages residents to continue to reach out.