

Land at an old clay mine gets a new life as a solar energy system

The town of Bethlehem in Albany County, NY, is home to 35,000 residents. Hailed by Money Magazine as one of the Top 25 American Towns, its motto is *A Modern Community Built on Tradition*, a sentiment reflected in its Sustainable Bethlehem initiative. In 2015, where some saw an old clay mine, the town saw an opportunity to put renewable energy to work for its taxpayers.



“The town’s Sustainable Bethlehem initiative is our commitment to lead by example, encourage energy efficiency, and specifically to take actions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. NextEra Energy Resources’ solar installation at the town’s former clay mine site meets all these goals, and will also save Bethlehem taxpayers a lot of money with no capital cost. That’s a win-win for the environment and our taxpayers.”

– John Clarkson
Town Supervisor

In 2015, Bethlehem repurposed town land at a former clay mine to be the site of a 3.75-megawatt (MW) ground-mounted solar photovoltaic system. Working with a wholly owned subsidiary of NextEra Energy Resources, the town entered a 20-year power purchase agreement to have the entire system built with no upfront cost to the town or its taxpayers, ensuring that the town will enjoy two decades of energy at an affordable, fixed rate.

Unused Land Offers 20 Years of Energy Security

Through its new solar system installation, the town of Bethlehem:

- » turned a few acres of unused land into a 3.75-MW solar system with no upfront cost to taxpayers;
- » put a 12,350-module solar system to work toward its Sustainable Bethlehem initiative;
- » is expected to save \$5-7 million in electrical costs over the life of the agreement;
- » is meeting its commitment to generate solar energy, while its taxpayers from future energy pricing volatility;
- » will have a more predictable budget, allowing them to focus on other development initiatives; and
- » has asserted its position as a sustainability leader.

Building on a Legacy of Leadership

Bethlehem’s solar project stands as a legacy of leadership, highlighting not only the town’s commitment to renewable energy, but also taking advantage of Governor Cuomo’s NY-Sun Initiative, administered by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), which supplied financial support and incentives.

Solar Initiatives

Support for this project came from Governor Cuomo’s NY-Sun initiative, administered by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA).

Project Highlights

- » 2.75 MW direct current (DC) system
- » \$5-7 million expected savings
- » 12,350 solar modules
- » Enough to power an estimated 440 homes annually
- » Approximately 1,400 metric tons of carbon dioxide offset annually
- » The equivalent of taking 275 cars off the road every year