



Solar farm planned for former West Valley nuclear site

By [MIKE DESMOND](#) · OCT 1, 2018

Cattaraugus County is continuing its aggressive move into solar energy, with a solar farm planned for an unused section of the Nuclear Fuel Services complex in West Valley.

The plant is being built by BQ Energy from Wappingers Falls, a company that specializes in solar farms on landfills and brownfield sites. Once complete, the plant will contain enough solar panels to supply 10 megawatts of electricity - enough for 1,500 homes and small businesses.

The property is owned by NYSERDA, but this project would pay about \$50,000 in annual property taxes. BQ Director Jim Falsetti says his firm has three other sites in Cattaraugus.

"One is for St. Bonaventure, one is for Olean General Hospital and the other one - is that's under construction - is for the City of Olean," Falsetti said. "So there's just one customer for each one of those. New York State has carefully considered that and now they are offering what's called Community Distributed Generation, where people can sign up for the electricity."

The project is being handled through the Cattaraugus County Industrial Development Agency, which handles a lot of the legal procedures and developed the payment in lieu of taxes fee and the savings in electric bills for customers working through an energy broker.

Falsetti says the solar farms are good for the Cattaraugus economy.



The West Valley site is under construction.

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"Solar energy is great, but solar energy requires a lot of real estate to make it work," Falsetti said. "So here is a spot that people are okay with us doing it there. It's not a pasture. It's not a farm. It's simply property that has very limited other use." "Things happening that are supporting the local industry and supporting the local institutions and using property that has a limited other use," he says.

IDA Executive Director Corey Wiktor says there are some other solar farms in the works.