

OLEAN TIMES HERALD

Cattaraugus County IDA sets 6-month moratorium on solar applications

- By RICK MILLER Olean Times Herald

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OLEAN — The Cattaraugus County Industrial Development Agency Board of Directors voted on Tuesday to enact a six-month moratorium on new solar farm applications.



The moratorium comes after the approval of five solar farms in the county over the past three years.

Three projects have been in Olean. The IDA also has applications for proposed solar farms in Portville and **West Valley**.

And there are more to come, said Corey Wiktor, IDA executive director. There are three or four other solar projects on the horizon in Franklinville, Ellicottville and Allegany, he said.

Wiktor said the IDA has a \$5,000 per megawatt value when it comes to determining payments in lieu of taxes (P.I.L.O.T.) for projects. Across the state, those values range from \$1,200 to \$8,000 and vary in length from 15 to 25 years.

IDA board member Joseph Snyder, who also serves as a county legislator, said the biggest question with solar is what happens after year 15 when the P.I.L.O.T expires and solar farms would be assessed at full value.



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Wiktor suggested extending the P.I.L.O.T. to 25 years and increasing the value of the P.I.L.O.T. payments. "It's not more giveaway," he said. "It's more certainty."

"How do we value them?" Snyder asked.

Wiktor said the IDA needs a consultant with experience in the solar energy field to advise it on the best way to proceed.

The IDA also heard from Daniel Martonis, director of the county's Real Property Tax Services Office and Dan Padlo of Olean.

Padlo, who said he'd been approached by four solar companies about leasing his property, advised anyone involved in a solar lease to read it carefully.

Martonis said the P.I.L.O.T.s "are a pittance," compared to the revenues generated by solar farms.

Wiktor said that without the IDA's ability to negotiate a P.I.L.O.T., the solar farms couldn't be built. The taxes would be prohibitive.

The IDA may also want to include some kind of host community payments by solar farm developers, Wiktor indicated.

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