



Blakeman: Restore Local Control—Albany Should Not Bulldoze Rural Communities for Industrial Solar

Nassau County Executive and Presumptive Republican Nominee for Governor Bruce Blakeman Stands with Copake Residents Opposing Shepherd's Run

Nassau County Executive and presumptive Republican nominee for Governor Bruce Blakeman today voiced strong opposition to the proposed Shepherd's Run industrial-scale solar project in the Town of Copake, calling it another example of the Hochul Administration “running roughshod over local communities” by stripping towns of their say over massive energy developments.

The proposed 42-megawatt solar facility would cover approximately 700 acres of rural farmland across Copake and neighboring communities, raising concerns about the loss of prime agricultural land, impacts on historic sites, wildlife habitat, local schools, and the Taghkanic Creek Watershed that supplies drinking water to Hudson.

“New Yorkers support clean energy—but not at the expense of local democracy,” Blakeman said. “Albany should not be forcing industrial projects onto small towns that have clearly and consistently said ‘no.’ The Hochul Administration’s one-size-fits-all mandates ignore legitimate local concerns about farmland preservation, environmental impacts, and public safety.”

Blakeman criticized the state’s current siting process, administered through the Office of Renewable Energy Siting (ORES), for overriding home rule and marginalizing local governments.

“I’ve opposed state-imposed battery storage facilities on Long Island for the same reason,” Blakeman added. “Decisions that permanently alter a community’s character should be made with communities—not imposed on them. As Governor, I will restore a meaningful role for local governments in approving or rejecting large-scale solar and battery projects.”

Blakeman emphasized that his position balances environmental stewardship with common sense.

“There are smart ways to expand renewable energy—on brownfields, rooftops, and previously developed land,” he said. “Paving over hundreds of acres of productive farmland and sensitive ecosystems is not environmental progress. It’s environmental hypocrisy.”

Residents of Copake and surrounding towns have organized public forums, packed hearings, and mobilized across party lines to oppose Shepherd’s Run. Blakeman praised their civic engagement and urged state leaders to listen.

“This is not a partisan issue,” Blakeman said. “It’s about respecting local voices, protecting our rural heritage, and pursuing energy policy that makes sense for all New Yorkers.”

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