



**Cortland County Ag,
Economic Development,
Planning & Environment
Committee Meeting
~ Agenda ~**

60 Central Ave.
Cortland, NY 13045
www.cortlandcountyny.gov

Wednesday, May 13, 2026

10:00 AM

Room 302

View Meeting Virtually

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join:

<https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/258114895278310?p=bRmpUAKb2p2a5pTW3e>

Meeting ID: 258 114 895 278 310

Passcode: Bw2oe2Wd

Call to Order

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Committee Member Reed Cleland				
Committee Member Beau Harbin				
Committee Member Paul Heider				
Committee Member Jason Prentice				
Committee Member Sandra Price				
Committee Vice-Chair Mitchell Eccleston				
Committee Chair William McGovern				

Approval of Minutes

- 1. Ag, Economic Development, Planning & Environment Committee Minutes - April 9, 2026**

Resolutions

ON MOTION OF WILLIAM MCGOVERN

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1.

A Resolution in Support of State Legislation to Protect Prime Farmland and Strengthen Standards for Siting Major Renewable Energy Facilities (A.10519/S.8712)

WHEREAS, New York State has established ambitious clean energy and emissions reduction goals that require timely deployment of renewable energy generation and supporting infrastructure; AND

WHEREAS, Cortland County supports the responsible development of renewable energy projects while also protecting public health, community character, local economies, and critical natural resources; AND

WHEREAS, agriculture is a cornerstone of Cortland County's economy and contributes to Cortland County's overall food security and resilience, as demonstrated by the statistics contained in the USDA 2022 Census of Agriculture; AND

WHEREAS, farmland conversion can be permanent, and large-scale energy projects sited on prime agricultural soils may reduce long-term agricultural productivity and undermine regional farmland protection strategies; AND

WHEREAS, the Office of Renewable Energy Siting and Electric Transmission (ORES) plays a central role in permitting major renewable energy facilities under Public Service Law Article 8, and statewide standards should provide clear, enforceable protections for agricultural lands, including prime farmland and soils; AND

WHEREAS, A.10519/S.8712 (Woerner/Hinchey) would strengthen agricultural land protections by (1) defining "agrivoltaics" as the integrated, simultaneous production of solar energy and marketable agricultural products, (2) directing ORES to prioritize previously developed and underutilized sites such as brownfields, landfills, former industrial/commercial sites, dormant generating sites, and large built sites, (3) requiring enhanced evaluation of impacts to prime farmland and important soil groups, (4) requiring cumulative impact review and regional farmland considerations, and (5) strengthening decommissioning planning and financial assurances to ensure agricultural soils can be restored for future production; AND

WHEREAS, the bill would further support farmland preservation by establishing a farmland conservation fee for certain solar development on prime farmland, deposited into the state Agricultural and Farmland Viability Protection Fund, while exempting qualifying agrivoltaics projects to encourage dual-use designs that maintain active agricultural production; AND

WHEREAS, the legislation requires periodic reevaluation of these standards to incorporate new information and technology and to ensure continued effectiveness in balancing renewable energy development with the protection of a critical mass of farmland within each region; NOW THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED, that Cortland County supports legislation to amend the Public Service Law to strengthen farmland protection and food security considerations in the siting, design, construction, operation, and decommissioning of major renewable energy facilities, including by prioritizing previously developed sites and establishing clear standards for agrivoltaics; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, that Cortland County urges the New York State Legislature and Governor Kathy Hochul to enact this legislation to ensure renewable energy development proceeds in a manner that minimizes impacts on prime agricultural lands, supports regional farmland preservation objectives, and protects the long-term viability of New York's agricultural economy and local food systems; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, that Cortland County calls for continued partnership among New York State, the counties, ORES, the Public Service Commission, and the Department of Agriculture and Markets to implement siting standards that promote clean energy while safeguarding critical working lands and ensuring meaningful local engagement and practical, enforceable decommissioning and restoration requirements; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, that Cortland County shall authorize the Clerk of the Legislature to forward copies of this resolution to Governor Kathy Hochul, the Temporary President of the Senate, NYS Senator Lea Webb, Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie, Assemblymember Anna Kelles, Assemblymember Jeff Gallahan, the chairs of relevant state legislative committees, ORES, the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC), the Public Service Commission, the Department of Agriculture and Markets, and to the Town Supervisors and Village Mayors of the various Cortland County municipalities.

Action Items

Monthly Reports

1. **Department of Planning & Economic Development Monthly Report**
2. **Cornell Cooperative Extension Monthly Report**

Discussion Items

1. **Cortland County Housing Needs Assessment - Interim Report**

Adjournment