



THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

STEVE HAWLEY
Deputy Minority Leader
139th District

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August 27, 2025

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of the State of New York
New York State Capitol Building, Second Floor
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul:

I am writing to urge you to immediately halt the \$950 million Cider Solar project in Elba and Oakfield, as well as the \$345 million Excelsior Energy Center in Byron. Together, these projects would consume nearly 6,000 acres of farmland, much of it designated by Genesee County officials as "Strategic Prime Soil." This land is not idle; it is some of the most fertile in New York, producing high-yield crops like carrots, cabbage, onions, and essential feed for livestock.

Genesee County is among the leading agricultural regions in our state. For decades, my colleagues and I have fought to secure resources for Western New York agriculture, delivering millions in grants for processing plants, herd expansion, and modernization. These investments are now being threatened by your administration's reckless push for massive solar fields that pave over farmland in the name of extreme climate mandates.

The stakes could not be higher. Between 2021 and 2022, New York lost 14% of its farms and more than 9% of its farmland. If we continue to sacrifice productive soil for industrial solar projects, the long-term sustainability of our economy and food supply will be irreparably harmed. Despite your administration's claims, these developments will not advance sustainability; they will permanently degrade the ecosystems and communities that rely on this land. The ability for local control is also paramount versus the "Big Brother" philosophy of "The State" knows best.

I invite you, or any member of your administration, to visit my district (your former Congressional district) and speak directly with our constituents whose way of life is being jeopardized. Seeing firsthand the damage these projects are causing makes it clear that the right decision is to stop them and return these farmlands to production.

Sincerely,

Deputy Minority Leader Steve Hawley

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Hawley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "S" and a long, sweeping underline.

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