



For Immediate Release

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\$3 Million Federal Investment in Cohoes NY “Floating Solar” Demonstration Project Included in Federal Funding Bill

8,000 Solar Panels to be installed on Cohoes Water Reservoir Will Generate 100% of Electricity Needs for City-Owned Buildings and Street Lights

Cohoes, NY (March 9, 2022) – U.S. Representative Paul Tonko (D-20) announced today that \$3 million for the Cohoes NY Municipal Floating Solar Demonstration project is included in the FY2022 federal budget being voted on in the Congress this week, as part of the larger omnibus spending bill.

“This Federal support for our plan to put 8,000 solar panels on our water reservoir is essential to making our first-of-its-kind in the nation project a reality. The Floating Solar project will be transformational for Cohoes and the region, generating both clean energy and economic savings,” Mayor Keeler said. “It would not be possible without Congressman Tonko’s expert guidance and enthusiastic commitment to our novel idea. As a long-time advocate for clean energy and environmental justice, he immediately understood the potential impact of our vision when we brought the Floating Solar idea to him in 2020. He and his team have guided and supported us every step of the way.”

“We are also extremely grateful to Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer whose commitment to the Cohoes Floating Solar project ensured that the funding was secured in the Senate. His support for clean energy projects like this, in a working class community like Cohoes, is invaluable,” Mayor Keeler said.

When operational, the Cohoes Floatovoltaic (FV) clean energy installation will generate 100% of the city’s energy demand for its municipal facilities and street lights. The city’s current annual electricity cost is approximately \$660,000. Given the available size of its water reservoir, the city will still have 40% of power-generating capacity to make available for other community purposes. “We are working to ensure that this project has the broadest positive impact on our community, including exploring the possibility of the Cohoes School District and or the Cohoes Housing Authority also benefitting from this clean energy,” Mayor Keeler said. Cohoes is a Low-Moderate Income (LMI) community with an Environmental Justice designation.

The city’s proposed municipally owned and operated 3.2 MWdc Floating Solar demonstration project will be installed on its secured 10-acre water reservoir, at a cost of \$5.9 million. The city is pursuing additional government and foundation funding for the project.

“This project will demonstrate that leveling the playing field by providing grants to municipalities — as an alternative option to current tax credits for private investments — for Floating Solar installations would incentivize municipalities to invest in their own energy infrastructure in a sustainable way, while realizing the full economic benefits of doing so,” says Cohoes City Planner Joe Seman Graves. “The project may also spark interest in tapping appropriate water surfaces as a viable platform for solar energy generation.”

In a 2018 report, [National Renewable Energy Laboratory \(NREL\)](#) researchers estimated “installing floating solar photovoltaics on the more than 24,000 man-made U.S. reservoirs could generate about 10 percent of the nation’s annual electricity production.” The NREL report indicates there are 492 reservoirs in New York State, encompassing 134,425 acres of water suitable for Floatovoltaics. This could generate 16.4 TW-hr/yr. The Cohoes project was [recently featured by NREL as a first of its kind nationwide](#).

The federal investment, secured by U.S. Representative Paul Tonko and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, is included in the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) FY2022 Appropriations Bill, part of the Omnibus bill that is scheduled to be voted on this week.

This transformative clean energy infrastructure proposal was developed in partnership with RETTEW Engineering and U.S. Floating Solar, and with other expert guidance.

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