



**For Immediate Release**

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## **National Grid Commits \$750,000 in Economic Development Funding to Advance Cohoes, NY ‘Floating Solar’ Demonstration Project**

### **Grant will Support Key Installation Costs along with K-to-College Education, Workforce Development, and Research Components of Model Clean Energy Project**

**Cohoes, N.Y.** (May 3, 2022) – The Cohoes, N.Y. Municipal Floating Solar Demonstration project received a major boost today with the announcement by National Grid that the company is committing \$750,000 in economic development funding to advance the model clean energy project.

The National Grid grant builds on the foundational \$3 million federal investment in this first-of-its-kind in the country floating solar project, secured by U.S. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and Congressman Paul Tonko in March.

“The Cohoes Floating Solar project provides an unprecedented opportunity to localize power generation and drive down costs, all while shoring up our nation’s clean energy goals,” Tonko said. “I was proud to secure federal funding for this initiative through our FY2022 Community Project Funding process, and I’m thrilled to see these critical resources now being delivered. National Grid’s announcement today builds powerfully on that investment, and I commend them for their strong support of this project that will serve as a model for communities across the nation.”

“I was so pleased to work with my friend Congressman Paul Tonko to secure \$3 million for the City of Cohoes’s trailblazing Floating Solar array project. And it is tremendous that National Grid is stepping up in a big way with an additional \$750,000 towards the effort. This project has it all: renewable resources, high technology, energy savings, climate action and taxpayer savings. I am so excited to see it in action, and truly believe that Mayor Bill Keeler and his team are creating a model for the rest of the country. I appreciate National Grid recognizing this as well, and joining this impressive project,” U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer said.

In addition to supporting key costs to install floatovoltaics on the city’s water reservoir, the National Grid Renewable Energy and Economic Development Grant also includes a \$50,000 investment in the K-to-college education, workforce development, and university research components of this model project.

“National Grid is committed to a sustainable future,” said Rudy Wynter, president, National Grid, New York. “This innovative floating solar initiative is a perfect example of our commitment to building that future in communities that need it the most. We commend the City of Cohoes for their vision, as well as Congressman Tonko and Senator Schumer for their support of that vision. With a lifespan of 30 years, this floating solar array has the potential to result in significant energy savings for the city and serve as an example for other potential sites across the state.”

Since 2003, National Grid has provided more than \$125 million in economic development assistance to upstate New York businesses creating or retaining more than 60,000 jobs.

The National Grid Renewable Energy and Economic Development Grant, made possible in partnership with the Center for Economic Growth (CEG), will enable the city's plans for the Cohoes solar installation to include both a physical and virtual platform. The funding will support design of the physical platform to be used by students, researchers, and others to observe the 8,000 floating solar panel installation on the city's water reservoir, and also will be invested in projects to help spark curriculum and workforce development initiatives.

"This project is creating the nation's first municipality-owned and operated floating solar array, and the Center for Economic Growth was honored to act as an applicant on behalf of Cohoes and enable the city to access funding from National Grid. The City of Cohoes is showing the country what green leadership looks like and how that translates into energy savings for the community. This floating solar array is a big step toward small city sustainability, and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's associated mapping project will ensure this is only the beginning," said CEG President and CEO Mark Eagan.

The National Grid grant also will fund expansion of a visualization project developed by Dr. Jim Hendler, Director and Dr. John Erickson, director of Research Operations the Institute for Data Exploration and Applications (IDEA) Lab at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, which has mapped the nearly 500 additional potential floating solar sites across New York State, with an overlay of demographic and economic data to identify traditionally underserved communities. As a first step, the Floating Solar Explorer (found here: [https://bit.ly/floating\\_solar](https://bit.ly/floating_solar)) is designed to convey the clean energy and economic opportunity potential of installing floatovoltaics on human-made water reservoirs.

The city has also engaged with University at Albany solar expert Dr. Richard Perez, the Capital District Regional Planning Commission, and the Cohoes City School District on this initiative.

"The Floating Solar project will be transformational for Cohoes and the region, generating both clean energy and economic savings. But, for a working-class community like ours, it is just not possible to do this alone. The National Grid Foundation support, in conjunction with the federal funding, is essential for the success of this effort. We are very grateful for this tremendous vote of confidence in the Cohoes Floating Solar project," Mayor William Keeler said.

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. Cohoes, a Low-Moderate Income (LMI) community with "Environmental Justice" and "disadvantaged community" designations, has invested extensive staff time along with other financial resources to fund the initiative. The city is pursuing additional government and foundation funding required to complete the project.

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 installation will significantly reduce the city's current annual electricity cost of approximately \$660,000.

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. The Cohoes project was [recently featured by NREL as a first of its kind nationwide](#).

The \$3 million federal investment is included in the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) FY2022 Appropriations Bill, part of the Omnibus bill enacted in March 2022.

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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### **About National Grid**

About National Grid: National Grid (NYSE: NRG) is an electricity, natural gas, and clean energy delivery company serving more than 20 million people through our networks in New York, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. National Grid is transforming our electricity and natural gas networks with smarter, cleaner, and more resilient energy solutions to meet the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. For more information, please visit our [website](#), follow us on [Twitter](#), watch us on [YouTube](#), friend us on [Facebook](#), and find our photos on [Instagram](#).

### **Support for the National Grid Economic Development Grant funding the Cohoes Municipal Floating Solar Demonstration Project:**

Assemblymember John T. McDonald III, RPh said:

“The City of Cohoes “Floating Solar” Demonstration Project will not only create an economic benefit for the city, but also help accelerate our transition to a clean energy future. This additional investment from National Grid will help this project come to fruition, therefore providing our region with more resources in the fight to combat climate change. Thanks to all of the partners, my colleagues and the many others who continue to work on this historic project.”

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute’s Director of Research Operations at the Institute for Data Exploration and Application (IDEA), Dr. John Erickson said:

"The Floating Solar Explorer application uniquely brings to life data from the National Renewable Energy Lab, the Census Bureau and other open sources, enabling stakeholders from all sides to fully appreciate the impact of floatovoltaics. Working with the City of Cohoes in support of this project is a great opportunity for Rensselaer’s students to improve their knowledge and skills while demonstrating the use of open government data for a public good. We look forward continuing to work with this project so our students can further develop the Floating Solar Explorer, increasing its reach to many more municipalities across the United States." Dr. Erickson is partnering on the project in conjunction with IDEA Director Dr. Jim Hendler.

Capital District Regional Planning Commission Executive Director, Mark A. Castiglione, AICP, said:

“The Cohoes Floating Solar project is innovative and, we hope, will be a model for others in our region and beyond. I applaud National Grid’s decision to be a partner in the City’s success story by investing substantial economic development grant funding in the project underscoring their leadership role in the region’s efforts to develop a reliable, cost-effective, green energy portfolio,” said

Cohoes City School District Superintendent Peggy O’Shea said,

“We are excited about the city’s model Floating Solar project, in combination with the range of other related ‘Cleaner Greener Cohoes’ projects underway. These will provide a living laboratory for our students to explore how to save energy and resources, while raising awareness about future career paths in the trades, STEM fields and more. We encourage our students to be good stewards of the environment and to preserve and honor our city’s rich history.”

RETTEW Market Leader for Renewables, Jason Wert, PE, said:

“We commend the City of Cohoes on their pursuit of their Floating Solar demonstration project and look forward to the valuable lessons that the City and its partners will share in navigating the uniqueness of this technology. The City’s leadership in developing and collaborating across private industry, the Federal and State Government ensures that this project will advance renewables not only for the City, but many communities in the future that learn from their guidance.”

US Floating Solar, LLC Managing Partner, Richard Heller said:

“I have been promoting solar across the country for more than 15 years, and working to gain traction on Floating Solar for five. Globally approximately 3.5 gigawatts of floating solar has been deployed, but very little of that is here in the United States. NREL and others have documented the substantial potential just waiting to be tapped. This Cohoes project will educate about, promote, and pioneer floating solar to help accelerate adoption of this valuable clean energy option across the United States. We are honored to be a part of it.”