



Berkeley County Council Announces Large Solar Electricity Plant Coming to Berkeley County

BERKELEY COUNTY, WV - The Berkeley County Council announced Thursday that a Colorado based company, Torch Clean Energy ("Torch"), plans to install an approximately \$100 million solar electricity production facility at the former Dupont Potomac River Works explosives manufacturing facility. The Bedington Energy Facility will be one of West Virginia's first utility-scale solar projects.

The site of the project is a former industrial facility that was previously designated as a Brownfield site by the United States Environmental Protection Agency due to potential contamination from the Dupont operations. The project proposes turning 750 acres of land with very limited potential use into a 100 megawatt solar array that can power thousands of homes and businesses.

According to Jon Kilberg, President of Torch Clean Energy, *"Torch is excited to be working with Berkeley County to develop the Bedington Energy Facility. The Project will repurpose a former explosives manufacturing site, and-with approximately \$100 million invested-will be one of the nation's largest brownfield renewable energy projects. The Project will be a beacon for leading companies that are seeking to purchase clean energy and open operations in Berkeley County and West Virginia."*

In addition to the cheap and clean electricity, the project will bring in both local and state tax revenue with very little need for government services. Under a Payment in Lieu of Taxes Agreement entered into with the Company, Torch has agreed to make a significant yearly payment based on the number of megawatts of generating equipment installed at the site as well as an additional onetime payment to the Berkeley County Council for "quality of life" improvements, and Torch will install a 100 kilowatt solar array on a Berkeley County School at no cost to the Berkeley County Board of Education.

After the term of the PILOT, Torch will pay all property tax on the equipment going forward. Additionally, the company will pay local property taxes on the real estate, and generate state tax revenue through income taxes. The expected life of the solar panels is over 35 years.

The project is estimated to create 150 to 200 construction jobs during construction. By providing a source of clean, cheap, and reliable electricity, County officials are hopeful that the project will entice other companies to locate in Berkeley County. As more companies strive to lower their carbon footprint many companies are looking to purchase power directly from clean energy suppliers.

Once operational, this project will increase West Virginia's solar electricity production almost 10 fold. The Solar Energy Industries Association ranks West Virginia 49th for installed solar energy capacity with a mere 10.52 megawatts installed to date including commercial and residential solar arrays.

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