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NJMC TO GENERATE SOLAR POWER ON LANDFILL

LYNDHURST, N.J. – The New Jersey Meadowlands Commission (NJMC) plans to generate approximately 5 megawatts of solar energy on one of its landfills, the latest initiative in the agency’s push to produce renewable energy and encourage businesses to take advantage of the state’s growing green economy. The Commission announced the project today at its monthly public meeting.

“Using the top of a landfill to produce renewable energy is a great example of how we can use our resources to increase energy efficiency and protect the environment while creating economic opportunity,” said Joseph Doria, Chairman of the NJMC and Commissioner of the state Department of Community Affairs. “Finding new and creative ways to boost energy efficiency will play a critical role in New Jersey’s environmental and economic future.”

The Commission is seeking information from firms interested in designing, financing and operating the solar array on the 42-acre Erie Landfill in North Arlington. The selected firm would be responsible for safely closing the landfill and would be able to sell the solar power it harnesses to Public Service Electric & Gas’ energy grid.

The firm would also generate revenue by collecting financial incentives offered by the state to businesses who produce renewable energy, including tax credits and Solar Renewable Energy Credits. In addition, the company would have the option to collect methane gas at the site which can also be sold to the power utility.

“This initiative works toward Governor Corzine’s goal of making New Jersey a leader in the areas of renewable energy production and economic development,” said Robert Ceberio, Executive Director of the NJMC. “We protect the environment and fight global warming by closing the landfill and generating renewable energy. At the same time, we provide a profit opportunity for green businesses. It’s a winning proposition on all levels.”

The solar project announced today is in keeping with the goals of both the state Energy Master Plan and the NJMC Energy Master Plan. The NJMC has set a goal of achieving 20 Megawatts of renewable energy within the District by the year 2020 and is negotiating the creation of a 700 kilowatt solar array on District property.

The Commission has already made strides in the areas of energy efficiency and green building. The agency offers financial incentives for developers to build green within the District and free technical assistance to District municipalities who want to install solar arrays. The Commission constructed its new science center to nationally-recognized green building standards and is retrofitting its existing buildings to be more energy efficient.

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