Central New York Regional Planning & Development Board
126 N. Salina St., 100 Clinton Square, Suite 200, Syracuse, New York 13202 • Tel. (315) 422-8276 • Fax: (315) 422-9051
Kathleen A. Rapp, Chair
David V. Bottar, Executive Director

December 7, 2017

To whom it may concern,

This is to attest that Wells College has played an unusual and valuable role in our ***SolarizeCNY Regional Solar Initiative***, in which we undertook a collaborative procurement of solar energy for area municipalities. Our goal was to identify and develop viable solar projects on public agency facilities throughout the five upstate New York counties served by our organization: Onondaga, Cayuga, Oswego, Cortland, and Madison. Our thinking was that placement of solar energy systems on and around municipal buildings and public sites like capped landfills and water treatment plants would offer "proof of concept" of solar energy for residents and business owners in those same communities. *"If solar can work for my city, town or village, maybe it can work for me, too."* In addition, the *New York State Energy Research and Development Authority* and the *Department of Energy* have both been very supportive of our solar aggregation initiative as a model for other states and regional planning entities to emulate.

Our initiative began in September 2014 when our *CNYRPDB* Energy Management team began outreach to leaders of communities throughout our oversight region to educate them on the potential of reducing transaction costs and administrative time for solar energy by aggregating their smaller potential solar projects into one shared, bulk acquisition. Marian Brown, director of Wells College's *Center for Sustainability and the Environment,* attended one of those early municipal outreach meetings. She approached us to express that Wells College was desirous of integrating onsite renewable energy into its electricity mix, but struggled with the lack of administrative capacity and specialized expertise needed to evaluate all the inquiries the college was receiving from interested solar developers. She inquired if Wells College, despite being a private college, could participate in our collaborative solar procurement along with interested public municipal partners. While a small private educational institution was certainly not among our intended outreach targets, we could not come up with any compelling reason why Wells could *not* participate. So Wells College became one of our earliest Participating Organizations, committing to add nearly 2.5MW of installed solar to the initiative. Wells' proposed installation was larger than many of the other identified municipal projects, increasing the overall attractiveness of our aggregate project to interested solar developers. When successfully concluded, our aggregate solar initiative may add up to 40MW of installed solar generation within our upstate Central New York region.

Beyond being a Participating Organization, Wells College was actively involved in our collaborative procurement process. We invited Sustainability Center director Marian Brown to be a member of the review committee to help shape the terms of the *Request for Proposal* sent to a number of top-tier solar development firms. That review committee worked with our Energy Management team, representatives of the *Rocky Mountain Institute,* and our NYSERDA-funded consultant, *Optony*, to evaluate the submitted proposals and select the firm offering the best value to all the Participating Organizations. Marian has also been an advocate to leaders of municipalities in communities in and around the college, encouraging them to join Wells in this aggregation opportunity.

While work progresses toward final contract resolution among our solar development firm and each Participant Organization, we remain confident that our 24 participating municipalities – and Wells College - will soon become the beneficiaries of onsite solar energy generation, and our Solarize CNY Regional Solar Initiative will be viewed as a national model of success.

Sincerely,

Chris Carrick, Program Manager, Energy Management