



## **News from the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders**

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### **Freeholders Approve Improvement Authority Funding for Countywide Renewable-Energy Program**

SOMERVILLE – Solar arrays on public-sector rooftops in Somerset County could be producing energy by early 2011, according to Freeholder Director Jack M. Ciattarelli.

“We’ve identified a new and dynamic economic model whereby public-sector rooftop space will be, in essence, leased for the installation and operation of solar arrays. As a result, we’ll reduce our carbon footprint and decrease taxes by lowering our energy costs,” Freeholder Ciattarelli said. “A third party will own the solar arrays and take advantage of federal tax credits and accelerated depreciation which are not available to local governments and school districts.

“This exciting countywide program is central to our Long-Term Sustainability Initiative, which is dedicated to creating clean, renewable energy and keeping Somerset the greenest county in New Jersey,” he said. He also touted the shared-service arrangement that taps the county’s engineering and financial resources through the Improvement Authority for the benefit of the participating municipalities and school districts.

The announcement followed the Board of Freeholders’ authorization this week of up to \$500,000 to be made available through the Somerset County Improvement Authority to fund legal and engineering consulting fees associated with the county’s renewable-energy program.

The consultants will identify the county, municipal and school buildings to be included in the initiative and will prepare the bids that are expected to be advertised by the end of March, Freeholder Ciattarelli said.

“Through a fair and objective process, all public buildings in Somerset County will have an equal opportunity to participate,” he said. Buildings with larger, flatter rooftop space will be grouped with others that may have more challenging rooftop configurations.

In Somerset County, the aggregate roof top space on county, municipal and school-district buildings is more than 5 million square feet.

The county expects to recoup all costs, including those associated with hiring the consultants, through the generation of electricity and sale of the corresponding solar renewable-energy credits, or SRECs, thereby making the project taxpayer-neutral.

Somerset County’s Energy Council – the only formal county energy council in New Jersey – has endorsed the renewable-energy program.

The county will host outreach sessions for the towns and school districts on Feb. 19 to further explain the program.

The timetable following the issuance of bids in late spring calls for the selection of vendors by mid-year and construction to begin sometime in the second half of 2010, so some of the first solar arrays could be generating energy by early 2011.

[Click here](#) to see a flow chart describing the renewable-energy program.

**Jack M. Ciattarelli, Freeholder Director • Robert Zaborowski, Freeholder Deputy Director  
Peter S. Palmer, Freeholder • Patricia L. Walsh, Freeholder • Patrick Scaglione, Freeholder**  
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