



**For Immediate Release**

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Contact: Daniel van Hoogstraten, [dvanhoog@amplifirestrategies.com](mailto:dvanhoog@amplifirestrategies.com)

**Eastern Cottontail Solar Project Announces Dual Solar-Agricultural Land Use Through Sheep Grazing at Project Site**

**FAIRFIELD COUNTY, Ohio (Oct. 15, 2024)** – Today, the [Eastern Cottontail Solar Project](#) announced it will implement sheep grazing to assist with vegetation management at its project site, thereby helping to keep the land in agricultural use. The commitment to implementing sheep grazing has been filed as a supplement to Eastern Cottontail Solar's permit application with the Ohio Power Siting Board. The project will seek to partner with local shepherds to supply and manage the flock.

"Our commitment to sheep grazing is a major initiative for Eastern Cottontail Solar, as it aims to be the first U.S. project for developer EDF Renewables to implement agrivoltaics, which is the dual use of land for both clean energy generation and agricultural operations," **said Nick Lucania, lead developer of the Eastern Cottontail Solar Project.** "Dual solar-agricultural land use will support local farming and help preserve the agricultural heritage of Fairfield County, all while enhancing the land utilized for our project."

Incorporating a sheep grazing solution to assist with vegetation management once the solar site is operational provides many benefits for both the local community and the project. This initiative will create market opportunities for local shepherds, generate additional jobs, and drive further economic throughput by unlocking opportunities to advance regional agricultural-based industries such as meat, dairy, and wool. Sheep are also great stewards of the land; they can help increase plant growth and biodiversity, improve soil health, and reduce erosion, all while working to ensure solar panels operate at their maximum efficiency.

"As a native Walnut Township farmer focused on sustainable agricultural practices, I appreciate Eastern Cottontail Solar's commitment to working hand-in-hand with agriculture," **said Hayden Kandel, whose property abuts the project.** "There is a looming energy crisis in our region with the influx of data centers and major corporations, as well as the support required from the growing number of local businesses, the increasing Fairfield County population, and housing expansion. Eastern Cottontail Solar will help meet those demands with clean, affordable energy, which will reduce grid stress, vulnerability, and costs. It will provide significant local benefits, including tax revenue -- not from us, but for us --, job creation, environmental advantages, and enhanced national and energy security. Eastern Cottontail Solar's commitment to agrivoltaics now goes another step further and provides even more benefits for our community, including important opportunities for local food supply diversification, employment, and agricultural stability, all positioning Fairfield County as a resilient community."

**Lucania continued,** "Over the last four years, a hallmark of our project has been substantial engagement with the local community as a means to listen to concerns and incorporate feedback, which has created trust and established a strong partnership. The most common concern we've heard is that while solar

utilizes privately-owned land, it can displace active farmland. In response, we proposed incorporating sheep grazing to the community, allowing a solution to help land be productive for both energy generation and agriculture. It's a win-win for everyone in Fairfield County and makes a lot of sense for the entire community.”

Eastern Cottontail Solar, developed by [EDF Renewables](#), is a proposed utility-scale solar facility up to 220-megawatts that will generate approximately enough electricity to power the equivalent of 42,000 average American homes. It has the potential to support central Ohio's increasing demand for power, which is [expected to double in the decade leading up to 2028](#), at a time when [Fairfield County is projecting a significant increase to its population](#).

The project is estimated to create approximately 500 jobs between construction and operations and maintenance. This will be accompanied by a projected 270 indirect jobs created across local supporting industries. Over the life of the project, Eastern Cottontail Solar is expected to generate up to \$80 million in stable, long-term revenue for schools, police and fire departments, and local services throughout Fairfield County.

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