

Solar Power Plant Will Rise on Kearny Landfill

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KEARNY - Gov. Jon Corzine officially announced yesterday an \$8.5 million plan to construct a solar power plant on the grounds of the former 1-A landfill off of Harrison Avenue.

The funding, a grant from the state Board of Public Utilities, comes from the \$20.6 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act money awarded to the BPU.

The New Jersey Meadowlands Commission will lease parts of the 35-acre landfill to a company that will be responsible for designing, financing, owning and operating the solar facility.

The new plant will cover 28 acres, which is space for enough solar panels to produce 5 megawatts of power, according to the NJMC.

"We're reusing an underdeveloped piece of land," said Susan LeGros, of the Solar Alliance, a national advocacy group.

Corzine also took time to focus on the creation of "green collar" jobs in construction and maintenance of the facility. He estimated that the Kearny plant would create at least 180 jobs.

"It's a win/win situation for New Jersey," the governor said.

"Years ago, this was considered a fantasy," said Capt. Bill Sheehan, the Hackensack Riverkeeper who heads a local environmental organization.

Once completed, the Kearny plant will bring the Meadowlands area closer to the NJMC's Energy Master Plan goal of the production of 20 megawatts of renewable energy in the district by 2020.

The deadline for companies to submit proposals for the solar plant is early September, according to NJMC spokesman Brian Aberback. Once the plans are reviewed and a company is selected, he estimates the construction will take about nine months, but says it will depend on the size of the project.

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