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GOVERNOR CUOMO ANNOUNCES SOLAR ENERGY TO POWER BELLEAYRE, GORE AND WHITEFACE SKI CENTERS

ALBANY, N.Y. --- Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced today that the three state operated ski resorts at Belleayre, Gore and Whiteface Mountain have committed to using solar power to operate their ski lift and snowmaking operations.

“By using renewable energy to power major operations at these world-class ski resorts, we are making the region a cleaner and greener place for people to live and work,” Governor Cuomo said. “This is a perfect example of how our administration is jumpstarting New York’s clean energy economy and reducing the state’s carbon footprint – which is good for all New Yorkers. I am pleased to see this excited announcement come together, and I encourage people to check out one of New York’s premier ski resorts this winter.”

The 25-year power purchase agreement with Borrego Solar is the most recent of several environmental initiatives the state and ORDA have undertaken to run its business units with increased sustainability and efficiency. It is also in keeping with Governor Cuomo’s Reforming the Energy Vision’s NY-Sun initiative, a \$1-billion initiative to advance the scale-up of solar and move the state closer to having sustainable, self-sufficient solar industry as New York builds a clean, resilient and affordable energy system.

Gore Mountain is home to the most skiable terrain and largest lift infrastructure in New York State, and its massive snowmaking system, lift operations, and other electrical equipment use about 13-million kilowatt hours of power and cost approximately \$1-million in utility costs each year. The solar energy for Gore, produced at a location in Washington County, is expected to reduce Gore’s energy bill by over \$213,000 during the first year. Borrego’s projections indicate that the three ski resorts could save as much \$14-million over the 25-year period, utilizing more than 10 megawatts of solar power.

The solar projects received support from NY-Sun through the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), which administers the initiative.

“With this initiative ORDA will substantially reduce its carbon footprint essentially akin to removing over 46,000 cars from the road over the life of the agreement,” said ORDA chairman Pat Barrett. “We want to make sure that this wonderful recreational sport stays around for generations to come.”

“These projects demonstrate an innovative use of solar energy, which is helping a wide range of businesses across New York State reduce electricity costs and preserve the environment,” said John B. Rhodes, president and CEO, NYSERDA. “They are examples of tangible State actions under Governor Cuomo’s Reforming the Energy Vision strategy to build a clean, resilient and affordable energy system for all New Yorkers.”

The solar power project is the latest sustainable endeavor for all three resorts. Over the past two years, Gore Mountain has added 260 low-energy, high-efficiency guns to its snowmaking fleet, along with a several powerful fan guns, while Whiteface has added 100 guns to its fleet. Meanwhile Belleayre began transitioning away from diesel air compressors to electric, as well as adding energy-efficient guns to its fleet of 600 guns that are responsible for covering the Catskill region resort’s 55 trails.

Low-energy, high-efficiency guns use the same amount of water as a traditional gun, but the air that these guns use is 25-percent of a traditional gun. The energy savings come from running compressors for a shorter period of time, while making more snow in less time and shortening the snowmaking season.

All three resorts have modernized their pumping systems and/or compressors to further offset energy use, and over the last two seasons Gore has operated more lifts for more days than ever before, while using less energy than in past. ORDA mountains have been presented with four international “Silver Eagle” awards, one to Whiteface for Excellence in Environmental Education; and three to Gore for Excellence in Environmental Group Relations, Environmental Education, and Excellence of Visual Impact Resources.

Under NY-Sun, the growth of solar in New York State has increased more than 300-percent from 2011 to 2014, which is twice the rate of U.S. solar growth overall. A total of 314.48 megawatts of solar electric was installed as of December 2014 across the state, equivalent to powering more than 51,000 homes.

In addition to project support, NY-Sun also supports Community Solar NY, K-Solar and Shared Renewables. For information about NY-Sun, visit ny-sun.ny.gov.

For more information about ORDA’s venues, visit www.orda.org.

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Established in 1982, the New York State Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA) was created by the State of New York to manage the facilities used during the 1980 Olympic Winter Games at Lake Placid. ORDA operates Whiteface, Belleayre and Gore Mountain ski areas; the Olympic Sports Complex at Mt. Van Hoevenberg; the Olympic speed skating oval, Olympic jumping complex and Olympic arena. As host to international and national championships, the Authority has brought millions of athletes, spectator and participants to the region, resulting in significant economic development.