



Robert E. Antonacci II, CPA
Comptroller

COUNTY OF ONONDAGA

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NEWS RELEASE

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Comptroller Releases Audit on Beaver Lake Solar Panels

Administration Fails to Cooperate

Syracuse, NY – Comptroller Robert E. Antonacci II, CPA released his audit on the Beaver Lake Nature Center solar panels. “The Administration’s failure to cooperate was absolutely stunning,” Antonacci said. “It was clear the legislative intent of the Beaver Lake Nature Center solar panel project was to be used as a test case for future investment in solar technology. For the Administration to deny access to these records is poor government administration,” Antonacci continued.

The solar panels at Beaver Lake Nature Center became operational in the Spring of 2011. A website maintained on behalf of the park indicates how much energy is produced by the solar panels and purports to show financial savings generated by the solar panels.

First approved in 2009 by the Onondaga County Legislature, it was clear from meeting minutes and media accounts the Legislature was concerned about the payback period. “If going back and seeing whether something really saved us money is not within the Comptroller’s duties as chief accounting and auditing officer of the County, I don’t know what is,” Antonacci said. “The fact is we are not seeing a green return financially. If we had bonded at 2% the County’s \$40,000.00 investment, it would take longer than the 30-year useful life of the solar panels to see a return. And that does not even take into account the state and federal tax dollars spent on the project,” explained Antonacci.

Mr. Antonacci is a proud supporter of green technology. The Onondaga County Comptroller’s Office is the only one in New York State with a designated green auditor. “While there may be other reasons to install them, without state or federal aid, the solar panels are not economically beneficial to the taxpayers of Onondaga County,” Antonacci concluded.

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Antonacci said he would be happy to revisit the matter if the Administration decided to open up the books on the solar panels. "Of course I would revisit the report if the Administration decided to cooperate. The Comptroller's job is about getting the truth out to the public and to the Legislature so decisions can be made with the best information available. If County Executive Mahoney instructs her staff to cooperate, we will be glad to work with them," said Antonacci.

The audit is available on the Comptroller's website,

<http://www.ongov.net/comptroller/documents/BLSolarPanels160519.pdf>.

For further information regarding this audit, contact Robert Antonacci II, CPA at (315) 435-2130.