

A message from the RSU5 Sustainability Committee

Preserving Nature's Future

By the time RSU5 students return to school next fall, 80% of our school district's electricity consumption will be offset by solar energy generated at a solar farm in Acton, ME.

Last year, the RSU5 Board of Directors entered into a Power Purchase Agreement with investors and joined a group of non-profit organizations and municipalities in this solar venture. In doing so, RSU5 stands to save \$70,000.00 in the first year of the system's operation, and will reduce its carbon footprint by 2.66 million pounds of CO2 annually. This is equivalent to 136,000 gallons of gasoline not burned; 255 passenger cars removed from the road; 210,000 gallons of propane not consumed; and 29,091 pounds of coal not used.

The Acton farm is a grid-tied solar system consisting of hundreds of thousands of solar panels that absorb energy from the sun. Sunlight causes electrons to move through the wiring, connecting the solar photovoltaic panels, creating direct current (DC) electricity. This grid-tied solar array requires no batteries, no complex wiring, and no moving parts. Instead, it will inter-tie directly with the grid allowing the use of the grid itself as a big battery. The solar electricity will then be sent out to the grid and distributed on high-voltage power lines. A separate meter will track this exported electricity. Called net metering, RSU5 will earn credits that carry forward up to a year and can be used to offset 80% of electricity charges on its CMP bill.

At RSU5, we are very proud that our students will learn first-hand to be good stewards of the environment. This is the earth they will inherit and we are pleased that we can model how to make our world a better place for them, and for generations to come.

