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Portland, South Portland to create largest municipal solar farms in state

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The city councils of Portland and South Portland unanimously approved contracts Wednesday night with Portland-based ReVision Energy to create two of the state's largest municipal solar farms on each city's former landfill.

The Portland Press Herald reported ReVision will install a 2,992-panel photovoltaic array on South Portland's capped, 34-acre landfill at 929 Highland Ave. and 2,816 panels on Portland's 44-acre landfill off Ocean Avenue.

The municipal projects will be the newest additions to ReVision's growing portfolio of solar projects for municipalities, schools and businesses across the state. In late 2015 the company completed its **first solar farm** on an old municipal landfill, a 120-kilowatt, 396-panel project at Belfast's former landfill on Pitcher Road. The Belfast solar farm is expected to provide around 20% of the city's municipal electricity use.

"While there are some unique challenges to installing long-lived infrastructure like solar panels on a recovered landfill, the advantages are also obvious: this is land that is challenging to redevelop, and solar allows the municipality to turn the otherwise non-taxable and unproductive property into an energy-savings asset for the taxpayers," ReVision stated on its website about the potential market for municipal solar facilities on closed landfills.

But the Portland Press Herald reported that both communities won't see any savings in electricity costs for at least six years, with ReVision projecting the savings are likely to kick in after 10 years and potentially reach \$3 million over the 40-year life of the projects. The newspaper also reported an outside consultant hired to create a worst-case scenario for both cities reported it was possible both cities might not see any savings for up to 26 years.

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