



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara, Senate Republicans join business and labor leaders in opposition to 'NY Heat Act' (WATCH)

THOMAS F. O'MARA March 20, 2024

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Senator O'Mara's image is unknown

"The Albany Democrats continue to impose unaffordable and unrealistic clean energy mandates with no concern for their affordability, feasibility, or reliability," Senator O'Mara said at today's news conference.

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Albany, N.Y., March 20—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R-C, Big Flats) today joined his Senate Republican colleagues at a Capitol press conference to call for a cost-benefit analysis of New York's climate policies and to oppose a costly new mandate approved by the Senate yesterday known as the "New York Heat Act."

O'Mara, a member of the Senate Energy Committee, said, "The New York Heat Act is a disaster on the horizon for the vast majority of middle-class ratepayers. New York is already one of the least affordable and highest taxed states in America. Our state leads the nation in population loss. The Heat Act will only make it all worse. The Albany Democrats continue to impose unaffordable and unrealistic clean energy mandates with no concern for their affordability, feasibility, or reliability. They keep reaching deeper and deeper into the pockets of middle-class taxpayers, destroying family budgets, killing local jobs, and devastating local

economies with the promise of very minimal or realistic benefits for most New Yorkers.”

Daniel Ortega, Executive Director of New Yorkers for Affordable Energy who joined the Senate GOP at today’s news conference, said, “On behalf of our collation of business and labor organizations, I want to thank Leader Ortt and the Senate Republican Conference for fighting back against energy policies that are expensive, ill-conceived and bad for our economy. We need common sense and not extreme climate ideology to lead the way. New York is blessed with an abundance of resources. If we plan carefully, we can reduce emissions, protect jobs and keep costs reasonable for consumers. In order to get there, we must pause on our current course, appropriately measure the costs already imposed and stop passing new mandates like the New York Heat Act, which only make things worse.”

Senator Mario Mattera (R-C, 2nd Senate District), the Ranking Member on the Senate Energy Committee, said, “There needs to be a realistic plan not an ideological ban that will cost New York ratepayers trillions and result in real job losses for our hardworking men and women of labor. As a proud union leader who creates jobs, I know there is a better approach that avoids this costly ill-conceived and reckless approach to our energy future. It is up to those who are pushing this to accept reality and to join us to come up with a realistic way forward that protects our ratepayers and our workers both now and in the future.”

Since the approval of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) in 2019, Senate and Assembly Republicans have consistently demanded answers about what the far-reaching agenda will cost ratepayers and local economies, expressed concerns about the broad mandates being enacted by Governor Kathy Hochul and the Democrat-controlled state Legislature to implement it, and questioned if its goals are realistic or achievable.

Further, the Senate Republican Conference has unanimously opposed new energy costs and mandates such as the NY Heat Act (S2016-A). These policies will raise rates for at least 75 percent of New Yorkers, eliminate thousands of good-paying local jobs, and slap up to

\$50,000 in costs on homeowners who may be forced to transition from natural gas to electric heat.

New Yorkers are already struggling to pay high utility bills, the Senate GOP charged, largely driven by policies enacted by Albany Democrats. Even before CLCPA was approved in 2019, 25 percent of the delivery charges on utility bills were made up of New York State taxes and fees. Since then, things have only gotten worse. According to an analysis by the Empire Center for Public Policy of the first CLCPA report published by the Department of Public Service last summer, rates have already risen by as much as 9.8 percent.

Enacting the NY Heat Act into law would be a disaster for most ratepayers, O'Mara said. While the measure caps utility costs for 25 percent of New Yorkers according to its sponsors, the funding needed to continue to operate the grid will come out of the pockets of the 75 percent of the ratepayers who don't receive any assistance under the legislation. Republicans call it a classic political bait and switch, where a small group benefits while hard-working, middle-class families bear the burden of the cost. Further, the NY Heat Act would eliminate the "100-foot rule" for gas service that would lead to thousands of utility workers losing their jobs.

The Senate approved the NY Heat Act yesterday with the entire Senate Republican Conference voting in opposition. It is currently in the Assembly Corporations, Authorities and Commissions Committee.

Governor Hochul included a version of the act in her proposed 2024-2025 Executive Budget, calling it "The Affordable Gas Transition Act."

[Watch Senator O'Mara's remarks at the news conference [HERE](#).

Watch a video replay of today's full news conference [HERE](#).]