



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

New York State Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt along with Assemblymembers Norris and Morinello Call on Governor to Increase Local Control of New Energy Projects

ROBERT G. ORTT April 9, 2024

| ISSUE: **ENVIRONMENT, GREEN ENERGY, RENEWABLE ENERGY**

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In a letter to the Governor, New York State Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt, joined by Assemblyman Mike Norris and Angelo Morinello, voiced their opposition to the Renewable Action Through Project Interconnection and Deployment (RAPID) Act.

Under the RAPID Act, which the Governor touts as a so-called one-stop-shop for Environmental Review and Permitting of major renewable energy and transmission facilities that would be created within the Office of Renewable Energy (ORES) with the aim of fast-tracking renewable energy projects.

The RAPID Act will also undermine sound environmental review of major electric transmission facilities by imposing an unrealistic timeline for permit decisions. The act requires ORES to render a permit decision within a single year, in failing to do so, the facility shall be automatically approved, irrespective of its size or potential impact on the community.

Our bills (S.1411 / A.2365) asks that before a final permit may be issued, a referendum is held upon the question of an application for a permit establishing a major renewable energy facility in the municipality where the proposed facility intends to be located – in other words, giving constituents a chance to learn about and voice their opinions about any such project.

“Whether or not a large-scale green energy project is placed in a community should be solely dependent on the community and its residents,” **said Senator Ortt**. “It is not the duty - nor is it in the power - of Albany bureaucrats and overly-eager environmentalists to decide how a community utilizes the land within its boundaries. The RAPID Act is nothing more than a modern day land grab that seeks to grant Albany Democrats the ability to sacrifice local voices for their wayward green-energy policies. I vehemently oppose such efforts to silence the opinions and concerns of the residents I represent, and will continue to advocate for legislation (S1411) that strengthens the voices of those residing in communities where any green energy project is proposed”

“The reality of the RAPID act is that this will further remove the local control of these large energy projects, be expanded to fast track the approval process of transmission lines to these projects eroding property rights through eminent domain and municipality autonomy and continue to trample on our local home rule authority and public input,” **said Assemblyman Mike Norris**. “That is why my colleagues and I introduced legislation (A.2365/S.1411), which would require a public referendum on the location of new renewable energy projects. This would help to ensure community input and prevent an Albany-appointed official from ignoring the best interests of the residents. We should be working to increase “home rule” and community involvement not further chip away at it.”

“Overstepping local home rule, and not allowing the public to voice their opinions and concerns on large energy projects in their own backyard is not the right thing to do.

Residents who live in the communities that will host these large energy projects should always have a say on something that could drastically impact their way of life. I'm proud to stand by my colleagues Assemblyman Mike Norris and Senator Rob Ortt to introduce legislation (A.2365/S.1411) that would require a public referendum on the specific locations of the proposed energy projects," said Assemblyman Angelo Morinello.

Senate Bill 1411 is currently in the Senate Standing Committee on Finance. The identical Bill in the Assembly is in the Standing Committee on Energy for consideration.