



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

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News Release

O'MARA, COLLEAGUES CALL FOR REMOVAL OF 'HEAT ACT' FROM BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS

Albany, N.Y., March 26—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R-C, Big Flats) today joined his Senate colleagues, and other stakeholders and business organizations, to call on Governor Kathy Hochul and the Legislature's [REDACTED] majorities to remove discussions over the "New York HEAT Act" from this year's negotiations over a new state budget.

O'Mara, a member on the Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee, said, "The New York Heat Act is a disaster in the making for the great majority of middle-class ratepayers throughout this state. 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 [REDACTED] majorities continue to impose unaffordable and unrealistic energy mandates with no concern for their feasibility or reliability. They keep reaching deeper and deeper into the pockets of middle-class taxpayers, destroying family budgets, killing local jobs, and weakening local economies with the promise of very minimal or realistic benefits for most New Yorkers."

Senate [REDACTED] Minority Leader Rob Ortt said, "The HEAT Act is a direct attack on affordable energy and consumer choice. Albany [REDACTED] majorities believe they have the right to tell New Yorkers how to heat your home. The Senate [REDACTED] minority conference knows that one-size-fits-all mandates just don't work, and we will continue to advocate for a diverse energy portfolio that ensures clean and affordable energy options are available for consumers. I want to thank the stakeholders and businesses who are joining us to speak out against this dangerous proposal, and we urge the Governor and Legislature to remove the HEAT Act from consideration in the final budget."

Senate [REDACTED] minority conference members, business leaders, and other opponents of the HEAT Act over the past few years have repeatedly called for a cost-benefit analysis of New York's ongoing imposition of far-reaching energy mandates since the approval in 2019 of the "Community Leadership and Climate Protection Act" (CLCPA). They charge that the HEAT Act (S.2016) is a radical energy policy that would effectively ban the use of natural gas as an energy source for homes and businesses. If enacted, the HEAT Act would have disastrous implications, opponents said, including:

- > further driving up already high utility costs;
- > forcing homeowners to spend thousands of dollars to retrofit their homes to eliminate natural gas;

- > removing consumer choice on how to heat their homes; and
- > further driving up the costs of building homes and homeownership.

Since the approval of the CLCPA, Senate and Assembly [REDACTED] minority conferences have consistently demanded answers about what the far-reaching agenda will cost ratepayers and local economies, expressed concerns about the broad mandates being enacted and the unrealistic timelines to implement them set by Governor Kathy Hochul and the [REDACTED]-majority controlled state Legislature, and questioned if its goals are achievable.

Further, the Senate [REDACTED] Minority Conference has unanimously opposed new energy costs and mandates such as the HEAT Act. 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, according to O'Mara and his colleagues, largely driven by policies enacted by Albany [REDACTED] majorities. Even before the CLCPA's approval, 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, rates had already risen by as much as 9.8 percent.

Enacting the NY Heat Act into law would be another hard hit 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. Further, the HEAT Act would eliminate the current requirement that utilities provide free gas hookups to new customers within 100 feet of an existing line, commonly known as the "100-foot rule," a move that would lead to thousands of utility workers losing their jobs.