



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' -- for the week of June 23, 2025 -- 'The need to rethink NY's energy future remains urgent'

THOMAS F. O'MARA June 23, 2025

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Senator O'Mara offers his weekly perspective on many of the key challenges and issues facing the Legislature.

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communities and economies.

Weekly Column from

NYS SENATOR TOM O'MARA

for the week of June 23, 2025

“The need to rethink NY’s energy future remains urgent”

Last September, when Governor Kathy Hochul convened a two-day “Future Energy Economy Summit” in Syracuse, many of us were hopeful that it would begin a long-overdue, sincere, and transparent rethinking of the future of energy for all New Yorkers.

At that time, the need for this rethinking was gaining traction. Doubts were increasing over the Albany [REDACTED] majority approach -- an approach that has been built on rapidly imposing radical and sweeping clean energy mandates following the enactment of the Climate Leadership and Protection Act (CLCPA) in 2019. The state’s Climate Action Council (CAC), established through the CLCPA, issued its action report in December 2022, a year and four months after Governor Hochul was sworn in as New York’s chief executive.

From the outset, many of us have warned that the failure to put forth a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of the costs of implementing these mandates under their prescribed timelines doomed the entire effort. We have questioned the affordability, feasibility, and reliability of the strategy for ratepayers and taxpayers, business and industry, and local economies.

We have done so with good reason and it bears repeating.

The New York Independent System Operator (NYISO), which is responsible for managing the supply and transmission of electricity across New York State, issued a report in 2022, three months prior to the CAC's final report, entitled “2021 – 2040 System & Resource Outlook.” That report warned of future reliability shortfalls due to the CLCPA which will require the state's electric grid to triple its current generating capacity by between 110 gigawatts (GW) and 130 GW by 2042. This includes, because of the intermittent and unreliable nature of wind and solar, between 20 GW and 47 GW of Dispatchable Emissions-Free Resources (DEFERs), a generic name to describe an unknown source not yet developed. It will require 20 GW of new clean electricity generation by 2029. To put that growth in perspective, during the 23 years prior to September 2022, the state only developed 13 GW of new energy production, and only 2.6 GW over the five years prior. During that same five-year period, New York deactivated 4.8 GW of generation, for a net loss of over 2 GW – enough to power over a million homes.

In its 2022 report the NYISO politely characterized the required growth in electric generation as “unprecedented” and that “future uncertainty is the only thing certain (of the Albany [REDACTED] majority plan).” Bear in mind that the unknown costs of all of this will be borne by New York ratepayers, which is already taking place under the massive rate hikes being imposed by NYSEG, RG&E, and National Grid across our region, with much higher increases to come.

It's just the tip of the iceberg of how all of this will exacerbate the overall unaffordability crisis we have in this state.

Last July, a report from the Hochul administration finally admitted that their timeline to achieve 70 percent renewable energy by 2030 and zero emissions by 2040 isn't realistic and, in fact, can't be met under the plan with current technologies as it stands.

Later that same month, NYISO reiterated its warnings that under the current timeline the state is "at risk of blackouts without significant new generation coming online before the middle of the next decade."

The state comptroller followed up with an audit and report that the implementation of the [REDACTED] majority's climate agenda has been seriously flawed and, especially, that its true costs remain unknown. The comptroller's audit further cemented long-held doubts over the current plan's affordability, feasibility, and reliability.

Consequently, when Governor Hochul convened last September's energy summit, we wondered if it would be a “back to the drawing board” moment on the CLCPA timeline and other climate mandates. Equally important, would it lead to an honest, open, long-awaited, and desperately needed public discussion on the realities of where we're headed?

In its 2025 Power Trends recently issued on June 2, NYISO again reiterated its reliability concerns stating that "as traditional fossil-fueled generation deactivates in response to decarbonization goals and tighter emissions regulations, reliability margins on the grid are eroding. The addition of new dispatchable generation needs to be considered in the near term to mitigate the dual risks of accelerated load growth and aging infrastructure."

NYISO President and CEO Rich Dewey said, "In addition to new conventional supply, the repowering of aging, inefficient and higher emitting assets should be evaluated as a bridge to a lower carbon future while delivering a more reliable electric system to support new economic development projects. Repowering older, renewable facilities may also hold promise for needed capacity. In short, every plausible option and opportunity to bolster both reliability and resource needs should be on the table."

While the summit nine months ago didn't produce the rapid turnaround in thinking many of us would like to see, we clearly did begin sensing a shift in short- and long-term thinking on one of the central challenges facing New York's future. That's especially true when it comes to the undeniable need for dispatchable power and the role that nuclear power, both small- and large scale nuclear, to address ever-rising

ensuring the reliability of the grid, and, especially now, ensuring a diverse energy portfolio that will keep energy options affordable and accessible for the long term.

Among a range of proposals, for example, we have called for expanding investment and research into alternative small scale nuclear energy possibilities.

Since the CLCPA's approval in 2019, Albany [REDACTED] majorities have been moving too far, too fast trying to inflict a zero-emissions economy on this entire state that will have zero impact on the state, national, or worldwide climate. Remember that New York State accounts for just 0.4% of global emissions.

Until we begin, in earnest, a straightforward reassessment of the realities of the current CLCPA strategy – including a recognition of the role that we believe nuclear energy, as well as high-efficiency, low-emissions natural gas generation, can and must play in meeting future electricity needs -- these actions will keep arriving with a devastating price tag and consequences for ratepayers and taxpayers, businesses and industries, school districts, farmers, and entire local communities and economies.

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