



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Tony Avella

72 Hours Until Electric Utility Rate Hike: Avella Moratorium Gains Support

TONY AVELLA March 29, 2017

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Albany, NY – In a few days, New Yorkers will see their electric utility bills jump under a plan advanced by the Public Service Commission (PSC). As that day approaches, recent legislation proposed by Senator Tony Avella has started to garner support amongst his Senate colleagues.

Senator Tony Avella's legislation, S4800A, would place a three-month moratorium on the nuclear-specific Zero Emissions Credit program included in the PSC's order to implement a large-scale Renewable Program and a Clean Energy Standard that was approved in August 2016.

The proposed legislation comes at a time when environmental groups across the state are expressing concerns that it would be counterproductive to spend billions of dollars to subsidize a nuclear industry that would compete with clean and renewable energy technologies, such as solar and wind. Moreover, the costs of providing this credit would be passed on to New York's already financially overburdened ratepayers. Approximately \$965 million is expected to be directed to the plants over the first two years alone.

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Placing a moratorium on this aspect of the PSC's order until July 1, 2017, will provide an opportunity to perform an unrushed and transparent examination of the ZEC program, as well as alternative mechanisms to succeed in meeting the State's ambitious, yet desirable, clean energy standard.

"I am in total support of the Governor's goal to reduce, if not eliminate the use of fossil fuels in New York. However, I am opposed to the way this program is being rolled out by PSC. Taxpayers are being asked to bail out power plants in the form of billions of dollars yet we aren't even sure how our money will be spent or what other options we have. If we can get our State to generate 50% of its electricity from renewable resources by the year 2030, we would be a model for the other 49 states and the impetus to create a country that prioritizes

renewable energy technologies and finally take control of the potential disastrous effects of climate change," **said Senator Avella.**

"New York has been a leader in the use of clean, renewable energy that reduces the use of fossil fuels. However, the proposed nuclear subsidy would be counterproductive to this goal and unfair for hardworking taxpayers. By implementing this moratorium we will be able to fully analyze the proposal and make recommendations as necessary for its improvement," **said Senator Jeff Klein.**

"The devastation and death caused by Hurricane Sandy in 2012 underscored the urgent need for New Yorkers to improve our carbon footprints. I represent a mostly working-class community, and am well aware that climate change has the largest impacts on communities like mine. As such, I fully support efforts to reduce or eliminate New York's use of fossil fuels. However, the haste and secrecy with which the ZEC is being implemented does not serve New Yorkers well, both because of the potential impact on ratepayers and because of the possible consequences of subsidizing nuclear power over other renewable, carbon-neutral sources. This moratorium is a good first step towards devising a climate change action plan that minimizes negative effects on middle-class and lower-class citizens of our state," **added Senator Marisol Alcantara.**

NYS Senator Jesse Hamilton said, "Senator Avella's proposal puts important clean energy efforts in sync, allowing for the appropriate examination of the Zero Emissions Credit program in light of emerging plans for the Renewable Program and Clean Energy Standard. This measure allows PSC, policymakers, and stakeholders to be sure that the public's investment is best aligned to meet the important goals of tackling the challenge of climate change and being judicious stewards of state funds."

Assembly Member Fred Thiele is sponsoring this legislation in his chamber. Additionally, the New York State Assembly's one-house budget resolution outlined a moratorium on the program until the PSC and New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) testify before the legislature as to the methodology used to reach the estimated cost and need for the expanded 12-year program.

While the length of the moratorium is being negotiated it is clear that many legislators and environmental groups have concerns about the way the PSC is handling this program.

RELATED LEGISLATION

2017-S4800A

- Introduced

- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate

- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate

- - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Establishes a moratorium on an order of the public service commission enacting a zero-emission credit requirement in relation to certain upstate nuclear generating facilities

March 01, 2017

In Senate Committee [Energy and Telecommunications](#)

Sponsored by [Tony Avella](#)

Do you support this bill?