



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## Senate Republicans: Urge Public to Reject Albany's Plan to Hike Energy Costs

FRED AKSHAR March 2, 2022

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ALBANY, NY – The New York State Senate Republican Conference today called on all New Yorkers to get involved and submit official public comment on the [Climate Action Council's \(CAC\) draft Scoping Plan](#) and radical efforts to eliminate reliable, affordable sources of energy. Natural gas hookups and services, as well as those from propane and heating oil, are vital for New Yorkers – especially in rural communities and during harsh winters – and cutting off these dependable sources of energy would be costly to residents and businesses

and ineffective on a global scale.

“This Energy Affordability Crisis, fueled by the failed policies of One-Party Rule, is unaffordable, unforgiving, and unsustainable. The former administration and now Governor Hochul’s administration are trying to rid the state of critical energy infrastructure sources such as natural gas hookups, which will only worsen the problem. This will be ultimately unaffordable for every day, common-sense New Yorkers, leaving them in the dark and in the cold. That’s why it is essential that we make our voices heard and call out these unrealistic ‘climate’ plans, which will only further burden our communities,” said **Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt**.

“The path to recovery for New York’s struggling families and small businesses is beset on all sides by soaring energy costs and One Party Rule’s failed policies, stifling red tape and suffocating bureaucracy. New York’s government should be doing everything it can to provide relief for our families NOW, not clinging to the impractical, out-of-touch policies and dogma of far-left activists and political donors. My colleagues and I remain committed to fighting for the needs and survival of everyday New Yorkers, the interest group that continues to be ignored by Albany’s so-called leaders,” said **Senator Fred Akshar**.

"The New York state budget proposal, a must-pass piece of legislation that keeps the Empire State's government operating through the next fiscal year, is no place for a non-germane amendment that bans fossil fuels, and is yet again an attempt to force these policies under the radar and with little regard to what the ultimate aim of these policies will cost consumers. This is a proposal that needs to be debated on its own and in a transparent manner that ensures all New Yorkers have an opportunity to truly understand the implications of limiting their access to natural gas utilities," said **Mark Valentini, Plumbing-Heating Cooling Contractors—National Association**.

“New York State’s pursuit of a zero-carbon future is a worthy goal, but the overall strategy and legislative mandates taken so far need a reality check. Over the past several years, the path taken has been fraught with severe risks to working New Yorkers and consumers, particularly the poor and elderly, who will continue to see escalating utility bills and less reliability. Legislation that’s been approved, and other bills pending, are creating a dangerous energy supply gap, causing prices to soar, and costing the state thousands of middle-class jobs,” said **John J. Murphy, International Representative of the United Association of Journeymen & Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry of the United States and Canada.**

“New Yorkers for Affordable Energy is a not-for-profit organization that supports greater access to clean, reliable and affordable sources of energy for residential and business consumers. It is abundantly clear to our members that many New Yorkers aren’t aware of the State’s energy proposals aimed at eliminating access to natural gas. If New York outlaws gas equipment, many New Yorkers will soon get an unbearable financial shock. Replacing a gas furnace or water heater will no longer be affordable, leaving residents with a \$30,000 price tag to revamp their entire home energy system. This comes in the wake of already-skyrocketing energy costs, which are directly related to the state’s efforts to limit use of natural gas. There must be a pragmatic, economic justice component to the State’s plan to address climate change for the overall wellbeing of New York residents,” said **Michelle Hook, Executive Director, New Yorkers for Affordable Energy.**

“Now it is critical that New Yorkers across the state comment on the Draft Scoping Plan so that climate policy recommendations can be made that are fair and balanced. The recent world events demonstrate that New York’s energy resources must be abundant, clean, and affordable into the future. New Yorkers have the chance for their voices to be heard about how these policy recommendations will impact our daily lives,” said **Gavin Donohue, President & CEO, IPPNY.**

“The fact is, New York’s climate goals can be reached with a balanced approach that uses a mix of energy sources without banning reliable and affordable natural gas and abandoning the natural gas system altogether, as advocated by many of the Plan’s proponents. By using an ‘all of the above’ approach – that is, renewables, efficient use of the natural gas delivery system for low and no-carbon fuels, and other technologies – we can meet the state’s emissions targets without causing the disruptions in reliability and resiliency that current studies show would occur if we cutover to electric power alone,” said **Donna L. DeCarolís, President of National Fuel Gas Distribution Corporation.**

The CAC has released a [blueprint to alter the state’s energy plans](#), which includes:

- No new gas service to existing buildings, beginning in 2024;
- No natural gas within newly constructed buildings, beginning in 2024;
- No new natural gas appliances for home heating, cooking, water heating, clothes drying beginning in 2030;
- No gasoline-automobile sales by 2035;
- Installing onsite solar or joining a community renewables program by 2040; and
- Installing geothermal heating by 2040.

New Yorkers have through April 30, 2022 to submit formal public comments on the proposed energy plan. Senate Republicans today encouraged hard-working residents and business owners to make their voices heard on these disastrous policies. New Yorkers can use this link to submit public comments: <https://climate.ny.gov/Our-Climate-Act/Draft-Scoping-Plan>.

In the meantime, New Yorkers continues to face extreme short- and long-term economic challenges, including:

- Inflation – a 7.5 percent spike in consumer prices over last year, the highest since 1982 – including skyrocketing costs for transportation, food, and other essential goods and services;
- Pain at the Pumps – average gas prices in the state have gone up by more than a dollar-per-gallon, or an estimated 39 percent increase from a year ago;
- Rising Home Heating Costs – monthly average home heating oil prices have also risen by more than a dollar per gallon from a year ago, or an estimated 39 percent increase from a year ago;
- Soaring Electric Bills – electric bills and rates have also gone through-the-roof across the state, with the price of electricity rising about 26% on Long Island from a year ago, an expected 46% increase this winter in the Hudson Valley, and some New York State Electric & Gas ratepayers have reported bills spiking 121% higher than the month before, for example. These skyrocketing increases in costs come from the rising cost of fuels internationally and follow the recent shutdown of the Indian Point Power Plant, which provided up to 25% of New York City's electricity;
- Declining Consumer Sentiment – since 2018, New Yorkers have become less optimistic about overall and future economic conditions, with recent concerns spiking over food and gas prices;
- Overall Tax Burden – New York has the highest tax burden in the nation at 14.1 percent – without factoring in a plethora of other burdensome fees; and
- Economic Freedom – New York has ranked last in the nation in terms of “economic and overall freedom” for years.

As the global energy crisis rages on, Senate Republicans have a multi-pronged approach geared toward providing relief, especially to low and middle income class New York families. Senate Republicans have proposed solutions to help mitigate the unaffordable costs being placed on New Yorkers in their “[Take Back New York](#)” 2022 agenda.

To cut energy costs and tame the energy affordability crisis, Senate Republicans are proposing:

- Mitigating the Impact of the Global Energy Crisis by providing nearly \$300 million in energy tax relief by eliminating the two-percent gross receipts tax and removing the underlying 18-A Assessment on utility bills;
- Suspending the State’s Gas Tax to provide instant economic relief for hard-working, commuting New Yorkers – which [Senate Republicans called for months ago](#);
- Rejecting the Democrats’ [Proposed Carbon Tax](#) that would raise prices at the pump by 55 cents per-gallon and on home heating bills by more than 25 percent; and
- No New Tax or Fee Increases in this year’s New York State Budget.

“New Yorkers should be able to commute to work every day without dealing with severe pain at the pump. New Yorkers should be able to pay their home heating and electric bills without breaking the bank. Our plan is to give residents and businesses the tools they need to get involved, and provide energy tax relief to ensure the people of our state have personal financial freedom during this volatile economy,” concluded Leader Ortt.