



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George M. Borrello

Senator George Borrello Introduces Legislation to Prohibit Use of Fossil Fuels in Manufacturing of Renewable Energy Equipment

GEORGE M. BORRELLO May 8, 2023

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ALBANY – Senator George Borrello has introduced legislation that would prohibit the use of fossil fuels in the manufacture or distribution of renewable energy equipment or infrastructure, citing the ‘inherent environmental and ethical conflict’ that results from using an emission-producing energy sources to manufacture ‘green’ energy sources like wind turbines, solar panels and electric cars.

“Currently, the products cited as the solution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions are manufactured, distributed and installed using fossil fuels. Coal is burned to forge steel for the foundations, towers and blades of wind turbines. Diesel-powered heavy equipment transports components, clears sites, digs foundations and assembles the structures,” said Senator Borrello. “Solar panels require the extraction of rare earth minerals and depend on coal as the primary energy source for the manufacturing process.”

“In order to produce and install renewable energy sources at the scale that will be required to power our entire state, the environmental toll from coal-fired power, diesel fuel and the mining of rare earth metals will be extensive and exists at cross-purposes with the stated goals of those advancing the climate agenda,” said Sen. Borrello. “If they truly believe that fossil fuels must be eliminated, then the state should not be financing the proliferation of structures whose manufacture, transport and installation produces significant emissions.”

Senator Borrello noted that even scientists who support the transition to a lower-emissions future are raising the alarm about the ecological impact of manufacturing renewable sources of energy, particularly the mining of rare earth minerals. A 2019 [article](#) in the journal, *Foreign Policy*, cites the toll of just one silver mine in Mexico:

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“Mexico is home to the Penasquito mine, one of the biggest silver mines in the world. Covering nearly 40 square miles, the operation is staggering in its scale: a sprawling open-pit complex ripped into the mountains, flanked by two waste dumps each a mile long, and a tailings dam full of toxic sludge held back by a wall that’s 7 miles around and as high as a 50-story skyscraper. This mine will produce 11,000 tons of silver in 10 years before its reserves, the biggest in the world, are gone.”

He also underscored the horrific human rights abuses that occur in the mining for minerals used in the manufacturing of renewables, including child and slave labor.

“As we look for cleaner and more sustainable ways of living, we should heed the bedrock rule of medicine which is ‘first, do no harm.’ New York State should not be allowing the installation of wind turbines or solar panels whose manufacture produces the greenhouse gas emissions our laws are trying to eradicate or that involves harmful child labor. We shouldn’t be promoting a cure that is worse than the disease,” said Sen. Borrello.

“Those who blindly call for New York to rapidly transition to renewable energy are perpetrating a shell game for political purposes, at great cost to our environment. This legislation would halt further damage as we wait for renewable technologies that can be produced sustainably, ethically and in cooperation with the goal of truly protecting our environment,” he concluded.

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