



**Testimony of Avni Pravin-Buck, Deputy Director of Alliance for a Green Economy
before the New York State Senate Environmental Conservation/Energy Budget Hearings**

January 28th, 2026

I. Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our testimony and perspective on the major environmental priorities that require funding in New York State for the 2027 FY Budget, as well as some of the emerging threats to energy affordability and our climate law that require our legislature's resistance. Alliance for a Green Economy (AGREE) is a New York State nonprofit that has been working for over a decade towards a 100% renewable, clean, safe, democratic, and affordable energy system. We are highly focused on effective and just program design for policies and funds that help the more vulnerable community members of our state transition to clean energy and healthier homes.

We also ground truth program and policy designs by assisting residents in our local community in Central New York in accessing energy efficiency programs, heat pumps, and solar. We intervene in most major utility rate cases in New York, where the rubber meets the road on what utilities spend our money on. We also participate in many of the major policy proceedings before the New York Public Service Commission and work to inform NYSERDA on how its programs could reach more people and be more equitable.

In my testimony, I'll discuss a few key areas where the state can and should fund good programs with tangible outcomes for New Yorkers with unaffordable energy bills, as well as initiatives that are emerging threats to our ambitious and urgent climate law. Corporations are hungry to build data-centers and nuclear reactors in New York and profit off of state handouts, energy infrastructure paid for by ratepayers, and low cost power purchase agreements, and without guardrails, ratepayers will be stuck footing the bill.

II. Energy prices are skyrocketing, and it's not due to clean energy spending

In September of 2025, a report conducted by the NY Department of Public Service and presented to the Public Service Commission offered calculations on how much New Yorkers are currently paying via their heating and cooling bills towards the state's clean energy programs, as well as projection of how much they might have to pay in the future.¹ The report found that CLCPA spending, or clean energy programs, garner a relatively small percentage of a customer's total electric and gas bills.

¹ See Case 22-M-0149 – Proceeding on Motion of the Commission Assessing Implementation of and Compliance with the Requirements and Targets of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. *Second CLCPA Informational Report on Overall Implementation of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act*. September 18, 2025. Available at: <https://documents.dps.ny.gov/public/Common/ViewDoc.aspx?DocRefId=%7B40075E99-0000-C639-832F-142B5C387BBD%7D>



Table 8: 2024 Typical Monthly Electric Bills with CLCPA Related Costs Disaggregated

2024 Typical Monthly Electric Bills with CLCPA related costs disaggregated							
	Central Hudson	Con Edison	NYSEG	NMPC	O&R	RG&E	LIPA
Residential - 600 kWh							
Total Bill	\$152.22	\$207.49	\$114.44	\$109.46	\$145.28	\$114.26	\$151.49
CLCPA	\$12.29	\$10.80	\$8.78	\$10.35	\$11.84	\$9.24	\$9.65
Percent	8.1%	5.2%	7.7%	9.5%	8.1%	8.1%	6.4%
Commercial - 50 kW and 12,600 kWh							
Total Bill	\$2,183.94	\$3,714.52	\$2,617.37	\$1,656.76	\$2,477.03	\$2,206.18	\$3,037.01
CLCPA	\$225.62	\$217.91	\$174.64	\$260.66	\$215.66	\$223.40	\$197.70
Percent	10.3%	5.9%	6.7%	15.7%	8.7%	10.1%	6.5%
Industrial -2,000 kW and 720,000 kWh							
Total Bill	\$104,057.82	\$154,832.57	\$104,240.96	\$76,884.42	\$90,534.09	\$85,498.23	\$140,620.21
CLCPA	\$12,307.38	\$11,624.74	\$9,572.84	\$14,050.78	\$10,424.62	\$10,608.53	\$11,439.50
Percent	11.8%	7.5%	9.2%	18.3%	11.5%	12.4%	8.1%
Industrial HLF - 2,000 kW and 1,296,000 kWh							
Total Bill	\$161,945.19	\$205,241.62	\$146,515.30	\$113,335.63	\$121,273.49	\$121,134.74	\$226,526.95
CLCPA	\$21,070.45	\$19,743.65	\$15,813.41	\$23,002.44	\$18,611.00	\$16,887.94	\$20,591.11
Percent	13.0%	9.6%	10.8%	20.3%	15.3%	13.9%	9.1%

Table 10: 2024 Typical Monthly Gas Bills with CLCPA Related Costs Disaggregated

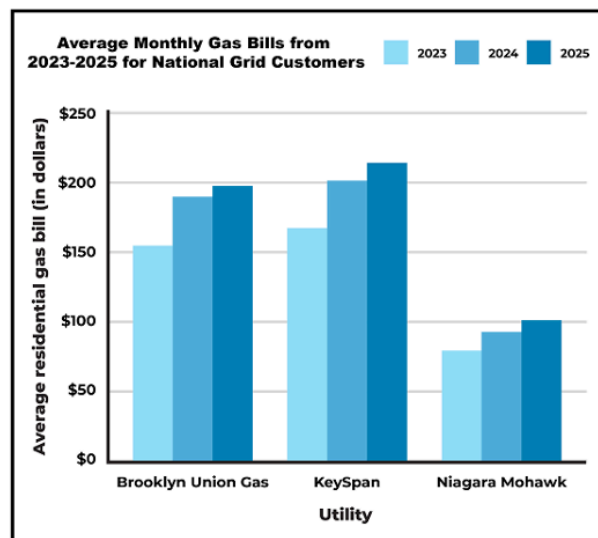
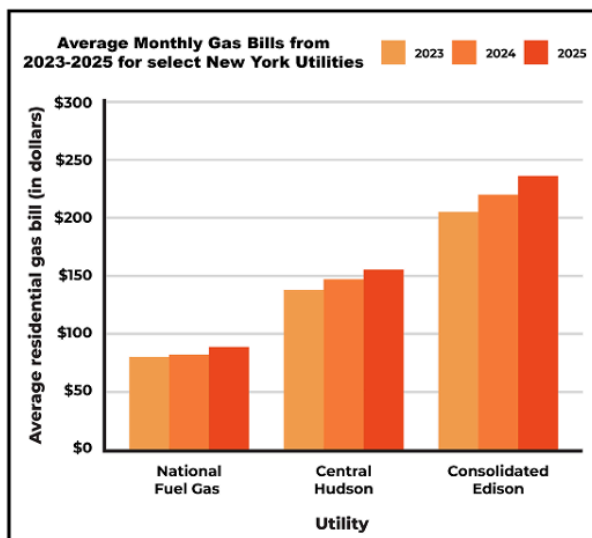
2024 Typical Monthly Gas Bills with Estimate of Energy Initiatives Disaggregated									
	Central Hudson	Con Edison	NYSEG	NMPC	O&R	RG&E	KEDLI	KEDNY	NFG
Residential - 83 Dth/Month									
Total Bill	\$169.64	\$207.39	\$92.57	\$83.32	\$120.76	\$77.62	\$143.78	\$152.09	\$69.00
Energy Initiatives	\$0.91	\$1.32	\$1.64	\$1.65	\$0.71	\$0.32	\$2.68	\$2.33	\$1.39
Percent	0.5%	0.6%	1.8%	2.0%	0.6%	0.4%	1.9%	1.5%	2.0%
Commercial - 2,500 Dth/Month									
Total Bill	\$2,613.57	\$2,916.43	\$1,640.73	\$1,491.20	\$2,147.56	\$1,400.59	\$2,866.04	\$3,303.44	\$1,788.48
Energy Initiatives	\$10.31	\$39.74	\$48.42	\$47.99	\$2.98	\$9.59	\$94.11	\$67.74	\$10.80
Percent	0.4%	1.4%	3.0%	3.2%	0.1%	0.7%	3.3%	2.1%	0.6%
Industrial - 10,000 Dth/Month									
Total Bill	\$10,073.37	\$10,349.51	\$7,717.65	\$5,197.13	\$8,266.71	\$6,561.69	\$9,970.78	\$11,587.50	\$5,797.04
Energy Initiatives	\$39.44	\$158.97	\$202.12	\$196.13	\$11.30	\$37.02	\$376.42	\$270.98	\$43.15
Percent	0.4%	1.5%	2.6%	3.8%	0.1%	0.6%	3.8%	2.3%	0.7%
Industrial HLF - 100,000 Dth/Month									
Total Bill	\$98,029.12	\$131,990.46	\$43,677.47	\$39,361.02	\$80,363.60	\$41,300.81	\$94,804.10	\$110,681.93	\$50,246.67
Energy Initiatives	\$378.35	\$1,589.70	\$1,760.97	\$2,330.45	\$107.60	\$255.98	\$3,764.21	\$2,709.79	\$431.46
Percent	0.4%	1.2%	4.0%	5.9%	0.1%	0.6%	4.0%	2.4%	0.9%

At the September 18th meeting of the Public Service Commission where this was presented, the Chair of the Public Service Commission, Rory Christian, noted aging gas pipeline infrastructure as one of the primary drivers of high bills.

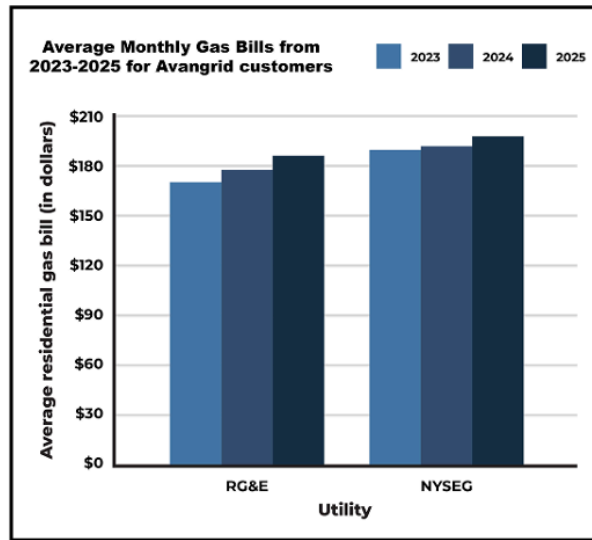
Fracked gas not only experiences price volatility in wholesale markets, causing the fuel to spike erratically in costs, but it also requires an expensive and expansive distribution network that requires ongoing maintenance and replacement due to the explosive nature of methane. The gas utilities are all too happy to build this infrastructure and charge it to ratepayers, hiking rates reliably every year, in order to turn a profit. An analysis published by Renewable Heat Now last year shows that five of New York’s major gas utilities, Central Hudson Gas & Electric,

Consolidated Edison, National Grid, Avangrid, and National Fuel Gas, raked in \$3.17 billion in 2024 in profits. This came as New Yorkers struggle to pay energy bills due to repeated rate increases, making it increasingly harder to live comfortably in their homes during our seasons of extreme heat and cold.²

Central Hudson	Profits doubled from 2015 to 2024, increasing from \$45.6 million to \$90.5 million.
Consolidated Edison	Profits increased by over 66% in the same period, ballooning from \$1.13 billion in 2015 to \$1.89 billion in 2024.
National Grid	Profits nearly doubled by a 98.7% increase over the decade, from \$377.6 million in 2015 to \$750.5 million in 2024, with a peak of \$856.1 million in 2023.
Avangrid New York State Electric & Gas Rochester Gas & Electric	Profits saw a whopping 185% increase in profits since 2015, from \$135.7 million in 2015 to a peak profit year of \$387.2 million in 2024.
National Fuel Gas	Saw varied profits over the ten years, with its highest profit year in 2022 when the company made \$68.9 million and its lowest profits in 2017 at \$46.9 million.



² Renewable Heat Now Campaign (2025). New York Utilities Make Vast Profits Off Residents by Expanding Gas System.
<https://renewableheatnow.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/NY-Utility-Profits-Brief-CORRECTED.pdf>



Clearly the gas industry is benefiting from misplaced blame on the Climate Law as a cover for their profits and their activities to defeat alternatives like renewables, heat pumps, and thermal energy networks so that they can keep their customers reliant on gas.

III. We must invest in solutions that actually reduce costs for customers

There are clear and known programs already in existence that help customers reduce their energy bills. Our staff have seen these bill reductions first hand in our own homes and in the homes of our neighbors and local communities who we have educated and assisted in transitioning for more than 10 years through solar, heat pumps, and energy efficiency campaigns. Unfortunately, these programs are often underfunded, sometimes severely, in favor of expensive investments in continuing the status quo - like propping up uneconomical nuclear reactors and building gas pipelines.

AGREE is working with the Renewable Heat Now campaign to support the inclusion of the following programs in the final state budget:

Increase funding to \$200 million for the EmPower+ Program

\$200 million for the Green Affordable Pre-Electrification (GAP) Fund

\$200 million to help oil customers save money with heat pumps

\$200 million for Public Thermal Energy Networks

Save the Weatherization Assistance Program's funding

Include Accelerate Solar for Affordable Power (ASAP) Act (S.6570/A.8758)

Extend J51 Property Tax Exemption and Abatement Program.



These are crucial investments in New York's Sustainable Future Program as well as other home upgrade programs and policies that will immediately reduce energy bills and support a sustainable energy future. We detail further information about each program, fund, or bill below:

- A. \$200 million for the EmPower+ Program.** This highly successful program provides insulation, air sealing, and energy efficient heating systems for 30,000 low and moderate income households each year. Without robust and consistent support from the legislature, this program faces funding cuts in 2026 and even deeper cuts in 2027 and beyond. [Executive Budget – Capital Projects includes \$50 million for the EmPower+ program for low-income households. Our recommendation: increase funding to \$200 million to ensure the program can meet demand.]
- B. \$200 million for the Green Affordable Pre-Electrification (GAP) Fund.** This essential program was established in 2025. When adequately funded, the GAP Fund will ensure that every New Yorker has the opportunity to participate in cost-saving energy efficiency and electrification programs. The program addresses pre-efficiency and pre-electrification costs (like roof repair, mold mitigation, and electrical upgrades) that present major barriers for many households to be able to enroll in the EmPower+ and Clean Heat Programs. [Executive Budget – Capital Projects reallocates \$2 million for the GAP program. Our recommendation: include the GAP Fund legislation S3315A / A.2101 (Gonzalez/Kelles) in the budget and increase funding to \$200 million to ensure the program has enough money to get started and can serve at least 10,000 households.]
- C. \$200 million for a NEW fund to help oil customers save money with heat pumps.** 1.5 million households in New York are stuck with old dirty oil heating and hot water systems when they could save an average of \$1,947 per year by upgrading to efficient heat pumps. The main barrier is that cash strapped households lack the up front funds to invest in heat pumps in order to realize the longer term energy affordability benefits. The new program would enhance the state's Clean Heat program to further assist customers that heat with fuel oil and other delivered fuels like propane, kerosene, and coal to purchase heat pumps to bring down their monthly energy costs and reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. [This program should be funded through the Sustainable Future Program or similar source.]
- D. \$200 million for Public Thermal Energy Networks.** Thermal energy networks (TENs) provide the most efficient heating and cooling available and do so without fossil fuels. New York is leading the nation in developing both utility-owned and publicly-owned TENs. Last year's budget included \$200 million for a second phase of state-owned TENs on state college campuses and local municipalities as part of the Sustainable Future Program. Ongoing funding is necessary to complete projects and bring TENs to more regions of the state. [This program should be funded through the Sustainable Future Program or similar source]



E. Save the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) from a State Funding Cut. The federally funded WAP program helps customers achieve long-term energy affordability through weatherizing their homes. Historically, 10% of DOE Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) funding from the federal government has funded WAP, but this year the Hochul administration is planning to redirect the money away from WAP, creating a 60% reduction in the program's funds and putting hundreds of jobs at risk. [Our recommendation: Specify in the State Operations Bill that 10% of HEAP funding should continue to be allocated to the Weatherization Assistance Program. We also support continued allocations at historic levels for the Heating Equipment Repair and Replacement Benefit, which OTDA is currently restricting to residents 60 years old and above.]

F. Include the Accelerate Solar for Affordable Power (ASAP) Act (S.6570 | A.8758) in the budget to deliver progress on energy affordability and grid reliability. Accelerating rooftop and community solar deployment while driving down interconnection costs will go a long way in lowering New Yorkers' energy costs and meet the state's growing electricity demand. Customers who install solar on their roofs or participate in community solar see significant bill savings. The ASAP Act raises New York's distributed solar goal from 10 gigawatts by 2030 to 20 gigawatts by 2035, advances utility interconnection reforms to lower costs and expedite deployment, and directs NYSERDA to develop an implementation plan to sustain cost-effective rooftop and community solar deployment. This will create 15,000 good local jobs, and lower utility bills for all New Yorkers by an estimated \$1 billion per year.

G. Extend the J51 Property Tax Exemption and Abatement Program. This critical tool funds the building improvements needed to meet LL97 emissions mandates, but is set to expire on June 30, 2026. J-51 can be leveraged to fund essential upgrades—like high-performance windows, heating system improvements, and structural repairs—helping to meet LL97 goals while maintaining long-term affordability for owners and tenants. [Executive ELFA Part O would extend the program to 2036. Our recommendation: Include ELFA Part O in the final budget]

IV. The Governor's support for nuclear energy will raise costs and exacerbate pollution

The Hochul administration recently pushed a massive up to \$33 billion subsidy for aging nuclear plants in upstate New York 2029-2029 through the Public Service Commission. In 2023 alone, ratepayers paid over \$520 million to subsidize these reactors (while renewable energy has only received \$51 million) - imagine the savings on household utility bills if we had invested that money instead in energy efficient appliances and insulation for the homes of New Yorkers. Nuclear spending far outstrips funding for any other Clean Energy Standard program; from 2020-2024, the nuclear subsidy spent more than \$2.6 billion on a single corporation in New



York. This 77% of the total Clean Energy Standard spending in this same time period, leaving little funds for renewable energy.³

Now, in addition to propping up expensive nuclear reactors on the ratepayer dime, the Governor is pursuing 5 gigawatts of new nuclear energy. There has yet to be a price tag attached to this proposal, or a timeline. We are very concerned that this will become a nuclear boondoggle, where the pursuit of nuclear energy wastes money and time that should be spent on solutions that immediately drive down bills for energy customers and on renewable energy, which will provide long term savings and safety for New Yorkers.

V. Left unchecked, data centers (and other large power consumers) will derail our best efforts to make bills affordable and green our grid

Data centers, cryptocurrency mining facilities, and other large energy consumers can drive up the cost of energy for residential customers. These power-hungry facilities will strain our energy generating and delivery capacity, triggering expensive investments to meet growing demand, and without guardrails, this cost can be passed along to residents and smaller businesses through higher rates. According to a report by the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), utilities in seven states passed more than \$4.3 billion in additional costs on to customers in 2024.⁴

One example of a large industrial power user is the Micron microchip manufacturing facility being built in Central New York, just outside of Syracuse. The proposed Micron Plant would add 15,674 gigawatt-hours (GWh) of electricity consumption to the New York Independent System Operator (NYISO) transmission system, more than 10% of statewide electricity consumption in 2024 (151,556 GWh).

This load growth will fundamentally change Central New York's load zone, and has significant implications for electricity costs, service quality, and infrastructure - not only in Load Zone C and the Syracuse metropolitan area, but statewide. By Micron's assumptions, the plant would exhaust all of the net generation capacity from Load Zone C, a zone that is currently an energy exporting zone, supporting electricity reliability statewide. An enormous, locally-concentrated demand for electricity in the Syracuse region, in addition to the cost of new electric infrastructure to serve the Micron plant, will result in higher electricity rates and bill hikes. When Micron was announced, the promise was that the plant would be supplied by 100% renewable electricity. However, as far as we can tell, there is no actual plan to build that renewable energy, raising questions about where that energy will come from and whether that promise will be met. Without a tangible plan, we are concerned about the growth in gas consumption and the continued reliance on expensive, aging, toxic nuclear reactors.

³ Ibid., pg. 47, Table 6: NYSEDA CES Program Billings

⁴ Jacobs, M. (September 2025). Connection Costs: Loophole Costs Customers Over \$4 Billion to Connect Data Centers to Power Grid . UCS Climate and Energy Program.
www.ucs.org/sites/default/files/2025-09/PJM%20Data%20Center%20Issue%20Brief%20-%20Sep%202025.pdf



This same issue is going to occur with large data centers and other large loads, which will strain the grid, drive up the costs of energy infrastructure that get passed on to consumers, and make it harder and more expensive to achieve our climate goals.

We support the following legislation to put reasonable guardrails on data centers:

- **S08540 (Gonzalez) / A09039A (Barrett)** - The accountability of costs for data centers act, or “AC/DC act”, will require all utilities to develop and effectuate with the Public Service Commission (“PSC”) a service class and rate schedule for large energy use facilities which is distinct from residential and smaller commercial customers. The rate charges for this separate service class will include costs incurred by the utility to serve large energy use facilities, such as the costs of infrastructure upgrades and operational costs.
- **S6394A (Gonzalez) / A9086A (Kelles)** - The Sustainable Data Centers Act creates regulations on the energy consumption of data centers, requires annual reporting on energy and water use, and prohibits low-cost purchase agreements with fossil fuel plants.
- **A9136 (Solages)** - This bill will require new data centers to incorporate thermal energy networks into their facilities. Data centers produce an enormous amount of waste heat that can lead to thermal pollution in the bodies of water that serve these buildings. Additionally, waste heat is a resource that could be harnessed to bring down the overall need and cost of heating for residents and businesses - making it an efficiency and financial win for New York.

VI. New York needs your leadership to ensure reasonable and just rates

Thank you for considering our recommendations to protect and advance our climate law. We look forward to a continued partnership to bring about a safe, affordable, healthy, and renewably economy for the future of New York. Please feel free to reach out with questions or concerns about our testimony.