

NYS 2026 Joint Legislative Budget Hearing Testimony

Environmental Conservation & Energy

January 28, 2026

The undersigned twenty-seven organizations appreciate the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations on the Governor's proposed 2026 Executive Budget and other energy programs as it relates to the implementation of the Climate Leadership & Community Protection Act (CLCPA) and the State Energy Plan.

Cancel Governor Hochul's Unaffordable Plan:

5 New Nuclear Power Reactors Estimated at \$96.5 Billion

We urge the Legislature to include a cancellation of Governor Hochul's unaffordable and irresponsible nuclear energy proposals in the 2026 State Budget. The huge budget proposals are moving forward without any financial or environmental assessment, legislative oversight, little public input, and in direct conflict with the legislative intent of the CLCPA. Behind closed doors, in the last two years, Governor Hochul, the New York State Energy Research & Development Authority (NYSERDA), New York Power Authority (NYPA) and Public Service Commission (PSC) have developed and approved monumental, far-reaching nuclear energy proposals which severely undermine the implementation of the CLCPA-required renewable energy transition to address the worsening climate crisis, that seeks to burdens ratepayers and taxpayers with a massive bill for as much as \$96.5 billion.¹ The cost of the most recent two nuclear reactors in America is approximately \$19.3 billion each.²

The Governor's recent announcement to build five 1-gigawatt large-scale reactors is arbitrary, unaffordable, irresponsible and in conflict with the CLCPA renewable energy transition plan. A national energy expert, Dr. Joseph Romm, found "The cost analysis underlying the Energy Plan is so flawed that neither the state nor the contractor who wrote it stands behind its accuracy or the consequences of using it .. [The] Plan advances an anti-affordability agenda, with plans for new reactors that will be a massive burden on ratepayers, comparable to the huge rate increases the twin Vogtle reactors hit Georgians with.³... Remarkably ... the Plan has no discussion whatsoever of the impact of the planned nuclear plant(s) on affordability."

Cancel Governor Hochul's Unaffordable Plan:

\$33 Billion in Subsidies for 4 Old Nuclear Power Reactors

The PSC recently approved ratepayer subsidies for the four upstate Constellation reactors for up to \$33 billion from 2029 to 2049. We urge the Legislature to include a cancellation of the PSC's unaffordable ratepayer subsidy in the 2026 State Budget. The City of New York, which estimated the subsidies would be up to \$33 billion, opposed the proposal and urged that a financial assessment be conducted first, as it could result in "massive ratepayer increases without justification."⁴

¹ The last two reactors built in America in the last 30 years are Georgia Power's Vogtle 3 and 4 reactors and cost \$38.6 billion. *Plant Vogtle: The True Cost of Nuclear Power in the United States*, <https://gcvdfund.org/plant-vogtle/> The cost of the two Vogtle reactors, \$38.6 billion, divided by two is \$19.3 billion. \$19.3 billion multiplied by the 5 reactors proposed by Governor Hochul is \$96.5 billion.

² Ibid.

³ *New York's Nuclear Anti-Affordability Fiasco: Why the State's Deeply Flawed Energy Plan Would Explode Electricity Rates* by Joseph Romm, Ph.D. January 2026.

⁴ Comments of the City of New York on Dept. of Public Service Staff Zero-Emission Credit Program Extension Proposal, 10/20/2025, Couch White, LLP.

The Governor has violated the public trust by having the PSC continue massive ratepayer subsidies to prop up four ancient reactors. In 2016, under Governor Cuomo, the state claimed the nuclear subsidy was needed as a bridge until renewable energy was ready and therefore the reactors should be subsidized through 2029. Then in 2019, the CLCPA passed and the state was required to develop a renewable energy transition plan to meet 2030, 2040 and 2050 goals. However, the state did virtually nothing on developing a renewable energy transition plan. Solar, wind and battery storage costs are now affordable, viable and their construction is soaring throughout the world. Governor Hochul wants ratepayers to pay sky-high bills to continue polluting, risky reactors for two more decades.

The Legislature should step in and require a timely phase-out of the reactors and fossil fuel plants and a timely phase-in to install solar and wind generation capacity and upgrade the state's electrical grid so the state can meet CLCPA goals.

We urge the Legislature to stop Governor Hochul's wildly unaffordable energy plan by placing a moratorium on any funding of new nuclear energy in the 2026 State Budget. It is a fiscally irresponsible explosion of costly nuclear energy projects to the tune of \$130 billion. (\$96.5 billion for five reactors based on recent actual costs added to the \$33 billion subsidy for the four existing reactors.)

The Legislature should be aware of three costly cautionary tales on the last reactor built in New York State and the last three reactors in 30 years built in America.

- Cancelled Shoreham Reactor: Long Islanders Still Paying Estimated \$23 Billion+ Tab
- Georgia Vogtle Reactors: Most Expensive Power Ever, 25% Rate Increase for Next 60 Years
- Cancelled South Carolina Summer Reactor: \$9 Billion Ratepayer Burden

The Governor has moved forward on the nine reactor proposals—which are major CLCPA-related policy and budgetary decisions—outside of the purview of the Legislature and to a large extent the public. Her nuclear plans decimate the CLCPA-required renewable energy transition plan diverting massive amounts of money and ignoring a renewable energy statutory directive and therefore violates the legislative intent in reaching the CLCPA 2030 and 2040 goals.

There has been no publicly available economic or environmental assessment done for any of the reactor proposals. The recent draft *State Energy Plan* and NYSERDA *Zero by 2040 Technoeconomic Report* are a travesty and would have the state be heavily dependent on fossil fuels and nuclear energy for decades to come.

How did New York end up with a \$130 billion nuclear fiasco plan and the sloth-like implementation of the CLCPA during a worsening climate crisis with little to no public or legislative involvement? How can we get out of this predicament?

Let's look back at another huge environmental problem with major environmental and health impacts requiring a large amount of funding—the State's Superfund program. The program was a great success, and tens of thousands of people were protected from cancer-causing toxic exposures. Starting in 1986, roughly every 10 years, Superfund was refunded with an adequate budget and a 10 year plan of action to clean up 800 toxic waste dumps. It was refinanced in 1996, 2003, 2015 and 2025. The lesson learned is that this highly successful program had adequate funds, an annual budget, annual progress reports, a 10 year plan of action, strong enforcement, public participation, and legislative and public oversight.

New Yorkers cannot afford the Governor's nuclear proposals. New Yorkers cannot afford to delay the CLCPA implementation. It is time for the Legislature to hold the Governor accountable. It is time for the Legislature to step up to the plate and take over the reins and implement the CLCPA. New Yorkers demand and deserve an affordable, safe and clean energy future. As a critical first step, the Legislature needs to include a moratorium in the 2026 State Budget to prohibit the funding by ratepayers and taxpayers of any more nuclear energy while an independent assessment and Year-by-Year CLCPA Transition Plan is developed.

Fiscally Responsible CLCPA Plan of Action in State Budget:

1. Moratorium on Nuclear Funding

2. CLCPA Renewable Energy Phase-In and Phase-Out Nuclear Energy & Fossil Fuels

We urge the Legislature to provide a legislative appropriation for energy and economic experts and not-for-profits, with public and legislative oversight, to conduct a timely CLCPA year-by-year *Affordable Renewable Energy Plan of Action* with an annual budget to:

- Phase-Out nuclear reactors and fossil fuel plants and pipelines in a timely manner; and
- Phase-In renewable energy, such as solar and wind power, geothermal heat pumps to substantially decrease energy demand, battery storage and major long-delayed improvements and expansions in the electric grid.

Thank you for considering our comments and recommendations.

Sincerely,

National & State Organizations

Anne Rabe
Alliance for Nuclear-Free New York

Michel Lee
Council on Intelligent Energy & Conservation Policy

Gary Michael
Don't Waste New York

Doug and Patti Wood
Grassroots Environmental Education

Mark Dunlea
Green Education & Legal Fund

Diane D'Arrigo
Nuclear Information Resource Service

Kathleen Nolan, MD, MSL
Physicians for Social Responsibility - New York

Regional Organizations

Molly Ornati
350Brooklyn

Merton D. Simpson
Albany County Legislator

Doug Bullock
Albany Progressive Action Network

George Povall
All Our Energy

Brian Eden
Campaign for Renewable Energy

Ramsay Adams
Catskill Mountainkeeper

Manna Jo Greene
Hudson Valley Climate Science and Solutions

Deborah Porder
Indivisible Scarsdale

Marilyn Elie
Indian Point Safe Energy Coalition

Catherine Skopic
Interfaith Moral Action on Climate

Susan Shapiro
LEAF of Hudson Valley

Tawn Feeney
Little Lakes Sustainable Network

Jerry Rivers
North American Climate, Conservation and Environment

Mark Dunlea
People of Albany United for Safe Energy

B. R. Lemonik
Putnam Progressives

Owl, S.D. Smith
Ramapo Munsee Lenape Nation

Yvonne Taylor
Seneca Lake Guardian

Jacquelyn Drechsler
Rockland Coalition to End the New Jim Crow
Environmental Committee

Nancy Vann
Safe Energy Rights Group

Peter Bardaglio
Tompkins County Climate Protection Initiative