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NY State Budget
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I'm submitting these comments because I strongly believe that New York has fallen short on its commitment to addressing climate change and the legislature must stand with the people of the state and support full implementation of the Climate Leadership & Community Protection Act (CLCPA) that was passed in 2019. What has changed since 2019? The climate crisis has only become more dire as we see unprecedented storms and damage to homes, businesses and our environment.

We have a federal administration that has attacked renewable energy with a vengeance and has sided with its cronies in the oil, gas and nuclear industries to keep us shackled to energy sources that are more expensive and undermine any attempt to reach the goals outlined in the CLCPA law. Governor Hochul is backtracking and caving to corporate interests and is not standing up for the people of New York. The legislature must put its full support behind the transition to renewable energy and must not enable Gov. Hochul, NYPA, NYSERDA and the Public Service Commission to continue to prop up the fossil fuel and nuclear industries. If the legislature demonstrates backbone, the people of New York will support them.

First, Gov. Hochul's idea of creating a "nuclear backbone" is incredibly irresponsible. She has proposed 5 megawatts of new nuclear and another 20 years of subsidies for the aging upstate nuclear plants that have been operating way beyond their projected lifespans. The state has already subsidized the upstate plants with \$7.6 billion since 2016 which could have been used to develop transmission lines, renewable energy projects and battery storage. Other states are way ahead of New York, including Texas, Iowa and California. The additional subsidies are projected to cost ratepayers \$33 billion more until 2049.

In her State of the State, Gov. Hochul mentioned **affordability**, the buzzword of the day. Newly elected Governors in NJ and VA spoke of affordability during their campaigns. Nuclear power is the most expensive form of electricity. The Vogtle nuclear plant in Georgia cost between \$32-38 billion when it was projected to cost \$13 billion. Ratepayers in Georgia have had their electric bills increase by 25%. There is no reason to believe New York will be different despite the industry's statements that there is a learning curve. A recently released report by Joseph Romm from the University of Pennsylvania points out the reasons why nuclear has not gotten cheaper, while solar has become much cheaper and faster .

<https://bpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/web.sas.upenn.edu/dist/0/896/files/2026/01/NY-Nuclear-Report-1-8-26-FINAL.pdf>

This month, January 2026, Synapse Energy Economics released a report "Sunlight and Storage into Savings: Enabling Energy Cost Savings from Distributed Solar and Storage Additions in New York." As it states, "New York is on track to meet its goal of 10 gigawatts (GW) of distributed solar by 2030, but it can aim higher. In light of federal barriers and uncertainty with respect to large-scale renewables and offshore wind, New York needs to take new action to

reduce carbon pollution and meet the statutory mandates in its climate law. Ramping up distributed solar and storage can solve that need, and, at the same time, produce large savings for consumers. Increasing distributed solar and storage would avoid \$1 billion in energy costs in 2035 and the savings would be shared between upstate and downstate (approximately \$542 billion upstate and \$481 billion downstate). All ratepayers would see an average electricity savings of \$87 annually for upstate and \$46 annually for downstate.

There are many bills that the legislature has enabled to languish and these are a few that should be included in the Senate and Assembly one-house budgets this session:

- 1) **Accelerate Solar for Affordable Power (ASAP) Act (Harckham S.6570 | Barrett A.8758)**. The ASAP Act encourages development of distributed solar. This legislation would reduce New Yorkers electricity bills by accelerating rooftop and community solar deployment.
- 2) **Bucks for Boilers Act (Rivera S3476A/Stirpe A6489)** The Bucks for Boilers Act would enable a phase-out of oil and gas boilers which would save money on energy bills, create many jobs and enable cleaner air and reduction of climate-heating emissions.
- 3) **Stop Climate Polluter Handouts (Krueger S3606A/Simon A3675A)** The Stop Climate Polluters Handouts Act would raise \$350 million through the repeal of some of the \$1.8 billion tax exemptions given to the fossil fuel industry, while preserving tax breaks that benefit regular New Yorkers. The Act builds on the “polluter pays” foundation of the Climate Change Superfund Act: the legislature acknowledged that the fossil fuel industry plays a major role in the climate crisis and should pay for climate-related damage repairs and resilience programs. Eliminating these subsidies would lower the burden on taxpayers, help close the budget gap and move us toward our climate goals.

There are many other bills and policies that have been put forth, but I am focusing on those that I am currently working on with other New Yorkers. Affordability is a great goal, but the way to get there is not by continuing to support industries that undermine our goals and destroy our climate. I urge you, our legislators, to commit to a one-house budget that advances the goals of the CLCPA and does not support expensive nuclear power that will take many years to develop or oil and gas pipelines that will increase emissions in our state. That is not progress. We depend on you for support.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.