

**ADOPTED**

**Resolution No. 2014-46**

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**Providing Comments on and Recommending Important Revisions to the 2014 Draft New York State Energy Plan**

WHEREAS, the 2014 Draft New York State Energy Plan (Draft Plan), which sets forth a vision for New York's energy future, was released for public comment on January 7, 2014, with a revised deadline for comments of April 30, 2014, and

WHEREAS, Tompkins County agrees with the statement in the Introduction to the Draft Plan, "The boldness of our solutions should match the magnitude of our challenges," and applauds the Governor's new initiatives on renewable energy and clean technology, in particular the State's reaffirmation of its commitment to an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, with an interim goal of a 50% reduction by 2030, and

WHEREAS, public policy decisions taken to implement the Draft Plan in the coming years will to a large degree determine whether or not New York State reaches these goals, and

WHEREAS, success in meeting these goals will require specific measurable targets for transitioning to renewable energy sources and reducing greenhouse gas emissions that are tied to specific actions across all sectors to achieve these targets, and

WHEREAS, such targets and actions are not currently included in the Draft Plan, and

WHEREAS, the Regional Sustainability Plans developed for all ten regions of New York State in 2013 under the Governor's Cleaner Greener Communities program required each region to develop such measurable targets and specific actions that could be undertaken within the regions to achieve those targets, and

WHEREAS, an example of such a target from the Southern Tier Regional Sustainability Plan is to reduce on-site building fuel and electricity consumption by 10% in residential and commercial sectors and 7.5% in the industrial sector within the next 5 years, and an example of such an action to achieve that target is to facilitate use of combined heat and power in private development projects and public facilities, and

WHEREAS, many actions needed to reach the State's greenhouse gas emission reduction goals can only be undertaken at the State level, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Planning, Energy, and Environmental Quality Committee, That the Tompkins County Legislature calls upon the Governor, NYSERDA, and the State Legislature to revise the Draft Energy Plan to include specific measurable targets to transition to a renewable energy future, in particular those specified in the attached list, including specific actions that need to be undertaken across all sectors to meet the State's goals for greenhouse gas reductions by 2030 and 2050,

RESOLVED, further, That the projected energy mix for New York State in the plan should reflect these targets, actions and greenhouse gas emission reduction goals,

RESOLVED, further, That copies of this resolution shall be sent to the Chair of the New York



## **Attachment to Resolution No. 1 4664 A from Tompkins County:**

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#### **Draft Plan Elements Supported by Tompkins County:**

- Tompkins County applauds the commitment to an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, with an interim goal of a 50% reduction by 2030 as the most important element.
- Emphasis on building resiliency to the impacts of climate change.
- Initiative to expand microgrids and distributed energy.
- Initiatives to transition to renewable energy sources.
- NYSERDA initiatives to provide assistance to communities to integrate and cross-reference land use, smart growth and transportation capital projects for consistent outcomes.

#### **Challenges for Tompkins County and other New York State Municipalities:**

- Tompkins County residents and businesses have experienced and suffered from recent weather events at cost to NYS and local taxpayers for recovery. We anticipate greater expense due to such events in the coming years.
- Tompkins County and other communities across the state will experience economic and social impacts from changes and uncertainties in the energy supply mix and price structures for existing and new sources of energy without advance planning for required transitions.

#### **Revisions Suggested to the Final Energy Plan**

- Specific measures must be included to implement the Community Transitions Program established as part of the NYS Energy Highway Blueprint. Any plan meant to establish “bold solutions” to new challenges must meet those challenges with new solutions by making sure that new opportunities and incentives are available in the communities that have built their employment and tax base on the older technologies; renewable technology incentives should be offered to companies to build in those communities formerly housing fossil fueled or nuclear fueled plants.
- Establish a clear path to achieve stated goals, most importantly by establishing specific state interim targets. For example, projections for electricity on page 59 of Volume II: Sources indicates an electrical energy generation mix of 40% natural gas by 2030 but only 5.5% non-hydro renewable generation by that same date. Greenhouse gas emissions goals cannot be achieved through that energy mix and a projection showing an energy mix that would achieve the State’s goals should be included in the Plan.
- Technology exists to meet forecasted demand through tougher building standard and energy efficiency methods. NYS should use its authority to require new buildings to achieve net-zero energy use by a specific target date.
- Tompkins County, the home of Cornell University, is the home of state-of-the-art research demonstrating the potential energy generating capacity using currently available

sources of renewable energy, such as those provided by researchers Jacobson, Howarth et. al. (Energy Policy 57, 2013) and Morris et. al. (Pace Law School Climate and Energy Center, *New York's Renewable Portfolio Standard: Where To From Here?* In addition, New York State has the opportunity to benefit from relevant ideas and analysis contained in the work of knowledgeable and reputable non-New York Groups such as Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), multi-university peer-reviewed studies, and United States National Academy of Sciences reports, all of whose work is directly related to and even includes specifics about New York State's possible energy futures. Policy and practice changes should be specified to incorporate these findings into the Final Plan.

- Include a greater level of detail about reductions in demand that could be achieved through energy efficiency improvements and demand-response requirements.
- Tompkins County is also the home of state-of-the-art research regarding the contribution of methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) and other greenhouse gases to climate problems, especially on a 20-30 year time horizon. The plan should address the risk from methane emissions in addition to those included in the Draft Plan regarding the negative impacts of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) on the longer time frame.
- Increasing NYS reliance on natural gas and policy support promoting a substantial build-out of natural gas infrastructure will inhibit the chances for successful achievement of the overall goal. New York should instead be investing more in clean, renewable energies, such as solar, wind, tidal, and geothermal to achieve a transition to a safer, cleaner energy future. Establish interim targets with reductions every five years and include specific activities to promote continuous action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Establish defined targets for clean vehicular transportation to achieve and surpass the Zero Emissions Vehicle memorandum of understanding recently signed by Governor Cuomo with seven other states.
- The Draft Plan emphasizes market-based solutions to our energy transition. We believe that a balanced approach that includes implementation of regulations or tax policies aimed at penalizing polluting energy sources and encouraging efficiency and renewable energy will be necessary to dramatically change the market in favor of renewable energy and efficiency in time to meet the State's greenhouse gas reduction goals; this complementary approach should be incorporated in the Final Plan.

#### **Demonstrated Activities by Tompkins County in Support of a Renewable Future:**

- See Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan, 2020 Energy Strategy, and Energy Road Map, and the Cleaner Greener Southern Tier Regional Sustainability Plan at <http://www.tompkins-co.org/planning/energyclimate/>
- Tompkins County is demonstrating the feasibility of current renewable energy technology through projects to expand solar PV installations, build infrastructure for regional biomass pellet delivery, create opportunities for energy efficiency improvements in existing housing to be reflected in the marketplace, and identification of planning and zoning barriers for solar and electric vehicle deployment.