



Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor of New York State  
Executive Chamber  
New York State Capitol  
Albany, NY 12224

January 29, 2020

Dear Governor Cuomo,

We, the undersigned elected officials from across New York State, thank you for your leadership in protecting our public health and environment and addressing the climate crisis. We commend the critical work your administration has done, including banning fracking, setting energy efficiency standards, contracting for offshore wind, land-based wind, and solar energy, developing electric vehicle infrastructure, and setting an ambitious plan to transition to 70 percent renewable energy by 2030 with the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA). In order to meet these goals, we urge you and your administration to update and change state policies to phase out the use of fossil fuels and ramp up renewable energy and energy efficiency.

New York State is now positioned to become a national climate leader. **To realize its potential, the state and its agencies including NYSERDA and PSC must fully align their respective policies with your administration's ambitious and visionary goals.** For example, the New York's Clean Energy Standard needs to be revised to require 100% carbon-free electricity by 2040 to align with the CLCPA. Yet, the state currently gets only 5% of its electricity from wind and solar.<sup>1</sup> By contrast, California has shifted 21% of its electricity to wind and solar in the last decade.<sup>2</sup> While 29% of New York's electricity comes from renewable resources, four-fifths of this electricity is generated by hydroelectric sources that have been operating for decades.<sup>3</sup>

To reach our state's goals and CLCPA mandates, wind, solar, geothermal, and energy efficiency must be immediately and significantly prioritized, incentivized and expanded. The pace of renewable energy review and permitting, and transmission upgrades must be increased. Our reliance on fossil fuels for heating, electricity, and transportation must be significantly reduced.

As officials representing communities across the state, we are eager to work with you to make New York the national and global leader on the climate crisis. To meet our state's goals, we must:

1. **Significantly increase state funding, support, procurement, and permitting to deploy large-scale renewable energy across the state.** For instance, NYPA now has expanded authority to procure renewable energy and bond for investments in renewable energy and storage, which should be used to large-scale solar to help meet the 70% by 2030 mandate, and to support community solar by selling to municipal Community Choice Aggregation programs to help meet the CLCPA target of 6,000 MW of distributed solar by 2025.
2. **Invest in large numbers of good, clean energy jobs in low-income communities and communities of color** by ensuring that distributed solar is

deployed in underserved communities, large-scale renewable energy benefits host communities, and prioritizing environmental justice issues and communities as part of the clean energy transition, including green job training programs.

3. **Increase investments in NYSERDA programs, local governments, and community-based organizations across the state** to support institutional, business, municipal, and community efforts to rapidly deploy renewable energy, energy efficiency, heat pumps, electric vehicle charging stations, and other needed infrastructure and create incentives for communities to welcome and host grid-scale renewable energy projects.
4. **Reject permits for all new fossil fuel infrastructure**, including new gas-fired power plants and small gas pipelines for residential gas expansion, and ensure a swift move off natural gas, including a new rulemaking to prohibit utilities from investing ratepayer funds in gas projects.
5. **Work with utility providers to create a more resilient 21st-century electricity grid** to handle increased renewable interconnections, electric vehicles, and electrification. This would include PSC directing utilities to invest in the infrastructure necessary to support widespread vehicle charging and New York State planning and permitting transmission to move renewable energy throughout the state.

In addition to these changes, our local governments and institutions need support in phasing out fossil fuels and making the transition to 100% clean electricity. Most of our local governments do not have the expertise or capacity to navigate the complex issues raised when renewable energy companies propose large-scale renewable projects. NYSERDA's Clean Energy Communities coordinators have lent crucial expertise to communities in such matters. We must continue and significantly increase funding for the program and others like it to provide the support we need to adopt policies to help achieve New York State's goal of 100% clean energy.

Lastly, to meet our climate goals, we emphasize the need for New York to phase out fracked gas from out of state. We urge your administration to prohibit new fossil fuel infrastructure projects including pipelines, compressor stations, peak-demand power plants, gas-fueled microgrids, gas plants, and gas storage facilities. As New York rapidly ramps up renewable energy, the state should seek every possible way to reduce reliance on gas.

We look forward to working together to achieve New York's swift and just transition to 100% renewable energy, which will be a win-win for public health, the environment, and the economy as we create good-paying jobs throughout the state and lead the nation and the world in clean energy.

Sincerely,

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1. New York Independent System Operator. "2018 Power Trends." <https://www.nyiso.com/documents/20142/2223020/2018-Power-Trends.pdf/4cd3a2a6-838a-bb54-f631-8982a7bdfa7a>
  2. California Energy Commission. "Electric Generation Capacity & Energy: In-State Electric Generation by Fuel Type (GWh)" [https://www.energy.ca.gov/almanac/electricity\\_data/electric\\_generation\\_capacity.html](https://www.energy.ca.gov/almanac/electricity_data/electric_generation_capacity.html)
  3. U.S. Energy Information Administration. "New York State Profile and Energy Estimates: New York Net Electricity Generation by Source, Oct. 2019." <https://www.eia.gov/state/?sid=NY#tabs-4>

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