

Declaring Support for the New York State Climate Action Council Scoping Plan

Referred to: The Energy, Environment and Sustainability Committee (Chairwoman Greene and Legislators Hansut, Erner, Maloney, and Stewart)

Chair of Energy, Environment and Sustainability Committee Manna Jo Greene, and Deputy Chair Gina Hansut offer the following:

WHEREAS, the Sixth Assessment of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) finds that climate change is causing dangerous and widespread disruption in nature and affecting the lives of billions of people around the world; and

WHEREAS, the IPCC Assessment concludes that rapid, deep and sustained reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) are necessary, including accelerated action in this critical decade, to limit global warming to within 1.5°C and 2°C in this century; and

WHEREAS, New York State recognizes the urgent need to reduce and eliminate GHG emissions in the atmosphere, passing the 2019 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act ("Climate Act") committing the State to:

- reduce GHG emissions by 40 percent by 2030 below 1990 levels and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.
- meet 70 percent of electricity needs from renewable resources by 2030, and 100 percent of electricity needs from zero-emissions resources by 2040.
- ensure a just and equitable transition that leaves no one behind, and dedicate up to 40 percent of the benefits of clean energy investments to Disadvantaged Communities; and

WHEREAS, the New York State Climate Action Council has approved for public comment a Draft Scoping Plan to meet New York's climate and equity goals; and

WHEREAS, the Scoping Plan calls for shifting to energy-efficient electrification in buildings and transportation as the primary solution to replace fossil-fuel combustion in these sectors, which together account for 60 percent of the state's carbon emissions; and

WHEREAS, the Scoping Plan calls for a phase-down of emissions from fossil fuel-fired electricity generation, while ensuring support and protections for impacted workers as they transition to clean energy jobs; and

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WHEREAS, the 2021 Jobs Study by the Just Transition Working Group for the NYS Climate Action Council estimates that meeting New York's climate goals will result in a net gain of 189,000 jobs across the state by 2030, alone, with a ratio of jobs gained to jobs displaced of 10 to 1; and

WHEREAS, the Scoping Plan includes measures that would expand the development of renewable resources and battery storage, encourage "agrivoltaics," or the co-location of agricultural activities with solar and wind, and provide resources to communities to assist with renewable siting and land-use planning; and

WHEREAS, the Scoping Plan recognizes the critical role that rural landscapes play, both natural and working lands, in sequestering carbon emissions and enabling the state to achieve net-zero emissions, and the importance of agricultural land preservation, open space protection, support for farmers to improve soil health, and policies that expand afforestation and reforestation and incentivize and assist private landowners in implementing sustainable forest management practices; and

WHEREAS, the Integration Analysis for the Scoping Plan finds that meeting emissions reduction goals of the Climate Act is technically feasible and will have the additional and significant benefit of improving public health by eliminating co-pollutants from fossil fuel combustion, resulting in an estimated \$50 to \$120 billion in health-related savings by 2050; and

WHEREAS, according to the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), over half of what New Yorkers currently spend on energy leaves New York, mostly for fossil fuels; and

WHEREAS, our communities would be better served by keeping energy spending primarily within the local economy; and

WHEREAS, on June 18, 2019, the County Executive signed an executive order to move the County toward the goal of having 100 percent of the county government's electrical needs produced by locally generated renewable energy sources by 2030, and the Ulster County Legislature reinforced Ulster County's commitment to environmental leadership by codifying the County's renewable energy use into law on September 17, 2019; now, therefore be it

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RESOLVED, the Ulster County Legislature affirms the critical importance of meeting the emissions and equity goals of the Climate Act, which will help mitigate dangerous warming while delivering the additional benefits of improving public health, economic opportunities, agricultural land open space protection, and quality of life for the people of Ulster County; and, be it further

RESOLVED, the County Legislature declares its support for prohibiting an expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure, which contradicts the goals of the Climate Act, and for transitioning to efficient electricity-based solutions for buildings and transportation; and, be it further

RESOLVED, the County Legislature supports a planning process for a managed transition of the utility gas system that maintains affordable, safe, and reliable utility service and protects low- and moderate-income households from an undue burden in the transition; and, be it further

RESOLVED, the County Legislature supports the recommendations of the Scoping Plan for advanced building codes that will improve the energy efficiency of new buildings, creating healthier living and work environments while reducing monthly energy costs; and, be it further

RESOLVED, the County Legislature supports the recommendations of the Scoping Plan to phase in code requirements prohibiting on-site combustion of fossil fuels in new buildings over a 2024-2027 period; and, be it further

RESOLVED, the County Legislature calls on the Climate Action Council to include in the Scoping Plan the necessary policies and support to help owners of existing buildings improve energy efficiency and transition to zero-emissions equipment, ensuring cost parity with fossil systems, with incentives and financing assistance as necessary; and, be it further

RESOLVED, the County Legislature supports Scoping Plan recommendations that make electric vehicles more affordable relative to gas-powered vehicles, and expand fast-charging infrastructure; and, be it further

RESOLVED, the County Legislature urges the Climate Action Council to include in the Scoping Plan recommendations to expand assistance for all-electric upstate municipal transit systems; and, be it further

