renewable energy Long Island

Clean Energy Safe Environment Healthy Planet

Date: September 24, 2025

To: The Honorable Senator Liz Krueger and Senator Pete Harckham
From: Melissa Parrott, *Executive Director, Renewable Energy Long Island*
Subject: Examining the Legislative, Budgetary, and Executive Agency Actions Necessary to Reach New York State's CLCPA Targets

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Dear Senator Krueger and Senator Harckham,

While we commend New York State's longstanding climate leadership embodied in the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA), and acknowledge the significant achievements and commitments made under this framework, I stand before you today to emphasize that this is not the time to retreat from its mandates. The CLCPA is the law of this state—not a suggestion, not an aspiration, but a legal obligation. Our state's clean energy transition efforts must reflect the binding nature of this commitment.

The expansion of renewable energy sources—wind, solar, hydroelectric, and battery storage—directly advances our climate goals while delivering measurable improvements in air quality and public health for all New Yorkers. We are acutely aware of the federal barriers currently being enacted against renewable energy development, particularly offshore wind. Nevertheless, New York must not waver. We must continue to plan and execute the buildout of a clean, renewable energy future. This requires moving forward as aggressively as possible with responsibly-sited onshore and offshore wind projects, solar installations, battery storage systems, and the enhanced transmission infrastructure essential to this transformation.

We also need to continue encouraging and building large-scale solar to meet our CLCPA goals. We would like to thank the Senate for unanimously passing 3 years in a row, the Students for Solar Act (S1986), sponsored by Senator Harckham. This bill is an example of implementing large-scale solar in school districts across the state by expanding the pay back timeline for energy performance contracts from 18 years to 25 years, giving districts a realistic time frame and lining up with the federal standards.

Let me be unequivocal: continued reliance on fossil fuels is not a viable path forward. Climate change is not a distant threat—it is here, and New York is experiencing its consequences firsthand. While nuclear power has been proposed as an alternative, the reality is that new nuclear facilities would take far too long to develop and prove prohibitively expensive, pushing us well beyond our statutory deadlines when proven solutions are available for deployment today.

I acknowledge that we are behind on some of our interim targets. Rather than abandoning our trajectory, we should stay the course, making reasonable adjustments of a few years where necessary to ensure we achieve these goals with integrity.

On the critical question of costs: yes, electricity rates are rising, but let us be clear—this increase is not attributable to renewable energy integration. Comprehensive studies have demonstrated that cost escalation stems from aging grid infrastructure, the mounting impacts of climate change itself, volatile natural gas and oil markets, and explosive energy demand from data centers and other major users. Renewable energy is not the culprit; it is part of the solution.

From an economic standpoint, and despite hostile federal policies, we must maintain our renewable energy transition, particularly offshore wind development off Long Island. We cannot yield to climate denial rhetoric or federal pressure to halt progress. We have invested too much and achieved too much to turn back now.

Consider the evidence: In its inaugural year of operations, South Fork Wind has provided reliable energy to Long Island. Through heat waves and periods of surging demand, this single project has generated electricity 92% of the time, powering more than 70,000 homes. This represents just one project. We have another nearing completion, a third beginning construction, and additional projects advancing through permitting. The train has left the station. Envision the collective impact of these offshore wind projects for New York—reducing greenhouse gas emissions, stabilizing energy costs, and strengthening our energy independence.

The contrast with fossil fuels is stark: while oil and gas prices remain volatile and subject to global market fluctuations, offshore wind delivers domestic energy at a fixed price point throughout the project's operational lifetime via power purchase agreements. This provides the price stability and predictability that New York families and businesses need.

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Expanding wind power—both offshore and onshore—is not optional if we are to meet the state's statutory requirement of a zero-emission electricity sector by 2040 under the CLCPA. This is a legal mandate, and we have the tools and technology to fulfill it.

Now is the moment for New York to reaffirm and strengthen its national leadership in renewable energy innovation and climate action. The eyes of the nation are upon us. We must not falter.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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