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Emphasizing the Massive Cost of Cuomo's Nuke Bailout to Energy Consumers, Albany Advocates Urge State Legislature to Block His Plan & Take His Own Advice on Indian Point: Close Upstate Nuke Plants Too

Albany – Today, a coalition of local consumer and environmental advocates called on the state legislature to block Governor Cuomo's costly and widely criticized nuclear bailout plan before his State of the State address in Albany, just days after the news that he intends to close the Indian Point nuclear plant north of New York City.

Members and supporters of the **Stop the Cuomo Tax** campaign emphasized that Cuomo's plan to bail out dangerous and failing upstate nuclear plants with \$7.6 billion from ratepayers will force consumers to pay much higher energy bills across the state. For Central Hudson consumers in the Albany area, that amounts to an \$87 million increase. And they pointed to the fact that the Cuomo administration negotiated secretive, backroom nuclear bailout contracts that have yet to be released.

This growing opposition to Cuomo's bailout plan comes in advance of Cuomo's regional State of the State addresses that are scheduled to be held in cities across New York this week and his official announcement of plans to close the Indian Point nuclear power plant.

"The Governor should take his own advice and close the other nuclear plants upstate instead of propping up a costly and unsafe industry with \$7.6 billion of New Yorkers' money," **said Alex Beauchamp from Food & Water Watch.**

"Governor Cuomo's decision to close the aging, inefficient, unsafe, Indian Point power plant stands in stark contrast with his decision to bailout three aging, inefficient and unsafe nuclear plants upstate. He can't have one standard for downstate and another for upstate. The Governor should have a consistent, straightforward position that it's time to move away from dangerous and costly nuclear energy plants, and invest in a clean energy future for New York. Clean energy will create more jobs and save the state millions over time. It's a no-brainer," **said Blair Horner of the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG).**

To fund the nuclear bailout, Cuomo will impose an unfair tax on New Yorkers' utility bills.

Under his plan, ConEdison residential consumers will pay \$700 million more; Long Island consumers will see their bills go up by \$500 million; Niagara Mohawk by \$465 million; and NYS Electric & Gas by over \$345 million, according to independent analysis from the Public Utility Law Project (PULP).

Many of those consumers already find it challenging to keep up with their utility bills.

Government data shows that over 800,000 New Yorkers are currently behind on their monthly electricity payments. 10,207 of those people live in the Albany area, and they can't afford another increase, especially one as unfair and unwise as this.

"It's time to put a stop to taking the hard-earned money of New York taxpayers and giving it to financially successful companies. When close to 1 million children live in poverty in NYS, 2.7 million are food insecure and 90,000 are homeless, how can we even think about giving nearly \$8 billion to a Fortune 100 company with revenues of over \$34 billion?" **stated Susan Zimet, Executive Director of Hunger Action Network of NYS.** "Many New Yorkers are already having a tough time paying their utility bills, sitting in cold houses with blankets to keep costs down. Any extra money needed to pay for heat is that much less for food. The money would be better spent investing in clean energy jobs and meeting the needs of our food insecure fellow New Yorkers."

As more New Yorkers struggle to keep their lights on, they are being left completely in the dark about the bailout deal and what Cuomo has promised to give to Exelon and Entergy, two nuclear energy corporations.

For months, the Cuomo administration has refused to release the bailout contracts, even in response to FOIL requests by concerned advocacy organizations and the news media.

That's why members and supporters of the **Stop the Cuomo Tax** campaign are today calling on the state legislature to investigate Cuomo's bailout plan and block it until the secretive contracts with nuclear energy companies are released in full and explained to the public.

"The state legislature should ask the Cuomo administration why they're hiding these bailout contracts from the public, and demand real answers. Until Cuomo comes clean about his backroom deal to transfer billions of New York consumer dollars to nuclear energy companies, the state legislature should block his bailout plan," **said Beauchamp.**

Under the Cuomo Tax, regular New Yorkers will be forced to pay higher energy bills over the next 12 years— from 2017 to 2029 – to bail out failing nuclear plants that should be replaced by renewable and clean energy.

Recent independent expert analysis shows that New York will save money and create more jobs over time by investing in solar and wind power, and moving away from nuclear power.

ABOUT STOP THE CUOMO TAX

Stop the Cuomo Tax is a grassroots campaign led by Food & Water Watch and New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG). Join and learn more at www.stopthecuomotax.org.



New Yorkers in Arrears on Utility Bills

Utility	Date of Data	# Ratepayers in Arrears More than 60 Days	# Termination For Nonpayment- All	Utility Bill Impact on Residential Ratepayers; Total Service Area
Orange & Rockland	16-Dec-16	17,003	222	\$84.8 million
Central Hudson Gas & Electric	12-Dec-16	10,207	746	\$87.9 million
Consolidated Edison	12-Dec-16	299,728	6,032	\$705.8 million
Niagara Mohawk (National Grid)	14-Dec-16	215,392	598	\$465.1 million
Rochester Gas & Electric	20-Dec-16	59,504	258	\$138.4 million
New York State Electric & Gas	20-Dec-16	85,533	150	\$348.4 million
LIPA/PSEG	31-Mar-16	117,808	1,197	\$501.4 million
TOTALS		805,175	9,203	\$2,331.7 million

Sources:

Arrears data:

<http://documents.dps.ny.gov/public/MatterManagement/CaseMaster.aspx?MatterSeq=1331&MNO=91-M-0744>

Data current as of 1/5/17

Utility bill Impact data: Public Utilities Law Project



Stop the Cuomo Tax Campaign Fact Sheet

What is the Cuomo Tax? Governor Cuomo wants to increase our electric bills to bail out old, unsafe, unprofitable nuclear power plants. The tax will cost New Yorkers \$7.6 billion dollars. Our money will go to plant owner Exelon, a Chicago-based Fortune 100 company with annual revenues over \$34 billion.

Who will it impact? Anyone who pays for electricity in New York will be hit by the tax; residents, businesses, municipalities, hospitals, schools, etc. ConEd *residential* customers will see their bills go up by \$700 million, Long Island by \$500 million, and Niagara Mohawk consumers by \$465 million. The *rest* of the tax will be paid by cash-strapped local governments and school districts, as well as businesses large and small, and even charitable organizations. It's important to know that over 800,000 New Yorkers are already behind on their utility bills, and many more are struggling to make ends meet. They cannot afford this tax.

Are there alternatives? New York's energy future lies with energy efficiency, smarter grids, solar and wind. These approaches cost less, create more jobs, and result in healthier communities. A recent analysis shows that phasing out nuclear power immediately and investing in renewables would ultimately save New Yorkers \$6.5 billion on their electricity bills and reduce more emissions than nuclear plants. Despite this, the Public Service Commission has refused at every turn to consider truly clean energy alternatives to bailing out these dangerous and outdated nuclear plants.

What about jobs? First, many more jobs would be created by constructing and operating new wind and solar plants. Independent, peer-reviewed research indicates that moving New York to 100 percent clean energy in all sectors would create at least 82,000 net new jobs. Second, about half of the fewer than 2,000 current nuclear plant employees would retain their jobs for years as they help shut down the plants.

How did this happen? Governor Cuomo directed the Public Service Commission to insert this multi-billion dollar bailout into the Clean Energy Standard last year, apparently without considering alternatives. Over the summer, the estimated bailout cost went up astronomically with no warning. Three weeks later it was approved with almost no time for public input. Making matters worse, the contract for the \$7.6 billion bailout has not been released by the administration, even in response to Freedom of Information requests by concerned organizations and the media.

Can this be stopped? Yes. Just as Governor Cuomo directed the Public Service Commission to insert the tax, he can direct them to remove it and build a better plan.

Who is Stop the Cuomo Tax? Stop the Cuomo Tax is a grassroots campaign led by Food & Water Watch and New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG). Over 32,000 New Yorkers have joined the campaign and over 130 organizations have signed a letter asking the Governor to drop his tax. To learn more, please visit www.StopTheCuomoTax.org.