



NYPIRG NEWS RELEASE

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OVER 100 ORGANIZATIONS, STATEWIDE, EXPRESS COLLECTIVE OPPOSITION TO ALARMING TRENDS IN NEW YORK'S ENERGY POLICIES

(Albany, NY) - Today NYPIRG, with broad support statewide, delivered recommendations to state leadership outlining proper implementation of energy policies that will protect New Yorkers health and pocketbooks. NYPIRG recommends that New York needs to invest in clean, safe, predictable, renewable energy compelled by the Climate Law.

“The states that have invested the most in renewables over the last 10 years have lower energy prices than New York. It is cheaper and less ecologically destructive to build out solar production than gas facilities. New York’s failure to boost solar production contributes to higher energy prices.” said **Blair Horner, Senior Policy Advisor for NYPIRG**. “Electrifying New York through solar production and battery storage will lead to lower energy prices and is a more appropriate response to the climate crisis, which we have seen is wreaking havoc in communities everywhere,” **Horner added**.

The Climate Act’s nation-leading goals and requirements, includes actions to achieve a reduction in economywide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of 40% by 2030 and 85% by 2050 from 1990 levels. New York’s goals are attainable. For example, nearly 15% of Germany’s electricity comes from solar, while New York State generates a paltry 5%. The coalition claims that implementing the state’s climate goals will help address rising electricity prices.

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AN OPEN LETTER TO GOVERNOR HOCHUL, THE NEW YORK STATE SENATE AND NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY

January 28, 2026

Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of New York State
Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Majority Leader of the New York State Senate
Honorable Carl E. Heastie, Speaker of the New York State Assembly
New York State Senators
New York State Assemblymembers

Re: New York's Failing Energy Vision

Dear Governor Hochul, Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, Assembly Speaker Heastie, Members of the Senate, and Members of the Assembly:

We, representatives of the undersigned organizations, write to express our collective opposition to alarming trends in New York's energy policies. Recent public pronouncements have proclaimed a "new" energy vision for New York, but what has been presented is nothing more than a myopic view of the future. An "all-of-the-above" energy strategy, for example, is nothing more than an embrace of continued reliance on burning fossil fuels (in clear violation of New York's widely respected Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, or "Climate Law") and promotion of the most expensive way to generate electricity -- nuclear reactors.

Instead, New York should return to a vision that is positive in both the short term and the long term. A vision that emphasizes affordability while acting within the scientific consensus on climate. Implementing the Climate Law accordingly will save money and lives.

In the past year, the Hochul Administration has approved an outrageously expensive gas pipeline project, delayed implementation of the All Electric Buildings Act, failed to keep up with benchmarks of the Climate Law,¹ and has consented to the continued operation of a fossil-fueled, energy intensive, publicly unsupported Bitcoin mining facility in the Finger Lakes.²

The fossil fuel market is volatile, unpredictable and continues to leave ratepayers guessing and unable to financially plan for the future. For example, in October of 2025, National Fuel stated that their residential customers should expect to see upwards of a

¹ Kinniburgh, C., "Why Did Hochul Back Down on New York's Gas Ban?", New York Focus, November 26, 2025, <https://nysfocus.com/2025/11/26/all-electric-buildings-gas-ban-hochul-new-york>.

² Misdary, R., "Upstate NY Bitcoin mine agrees to slash emissions, will get air permit from the state," Gothamist, November 10, 2025, <https://gothamist.com/news/upstate-ny-bitcoin-mine-agrees-to-slash-emissions-will-get-air-permit-from-the-state>.

16% increase on their electric bills this winter.³ As a recent review of the New York Independent System Operator recently observed, "Energy prices rose by 35 to 53 percent across the system, driven primarily by an increase of 42 to 66 percent in natural gas prices."⁴

Fossil fuels are dangerous, outdated and unnecessary. Each year an estimated 1,940 New Yorkers suffer premature deaths due to air pollution generated from fossil fuel combustion in buildings, the most of any state.⁵

New York needs to invest in clean, safe, predictable, renewable energy as stated in the Climate Law. It is cheaper and less ecologically destructive to build out solar production than gas facilities.⁶ New York's failure to boost solar production is leading to higher energy prices.

Electrifying New York through solar production and battery storage will lead to lower energy prices and is a more appropriate response to the climate crisis, which we have seen is wreaking havoc in communities everywhere. Battery storage is crucial to a clean and efficient electrical grid and will require continuation of improving codes, requirements and regulations around large-scale facilities.⁷

Here are our recommendations:

1. Follow the Climate Law. New York's law is based on the scientific consensus that the burning of fossil fuels endangers the planet and that the world must wean itself off of such power by the middle of this Century. Indeed, failure to do so will cost the state more than complying with it. The increasingly likely failure to meet the upcoming Law's climate goals is a failure of will, not the targets themselves.⁸ New York's goals are attainable.

³ National Fuel, "National Fuel Forecasts Winter Heating Bill Increase," October, 2025, <https://www.nationalfuel.com/news/national-fuel-forecasts-winter-heating-bill-increase-as-colder-weather-returns-payment-assistance-eligibility-could-provide-more-than-1500-in-bill-relief-to-western-new-yorkers/>.

⁴ Potomac Economics, "Quarterly Report on the New York ISO Electricity Markets Third Quarter of 2025," https://www.potomaceconomics.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/NYISO-Quarterly-Report_2025Q3_final_11-24-2025.pdf#:~:text=%2D%20Energy%20prices%20rose%20by,fell%201.4%20GW%20on%20average.

⁵ Rocky Mountain Institute, "New York Emits More Building Air Pollution Than Any Other State," May, 2021, <https://rmi.org/new-york-emits-more-building-air-pollution-than-any-other-state/>.

⁶ Storrow, Benjamin, "Wind and Solar Energy are Cheaper Than Electricity From Fossil Fuel Plants," Scientific American, June 17 2025, [https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/wind-and-solar-energy-are-cheaper-than-electricity-from-fossil-fuel-plants/#:~:text=According%20to%20a%20Lazard%20report%2C%20renewable%20energy,**Existing%20gas%20plants**%20\\$24%24%20%93\\$39%20per%20megawatt%20hour.](https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/wind-and-solar-energy-are-cheaper-than-electricity-from-fossil-fuel-plants/#:~:text=According%20to%20a%20Lazard%20report%2C%20renewable%20energy,**Existing%20gas%20plants**%20$24%24%20%93$39%20per%20megawatt%20hour.)

⁷ For more information, see NYSERDA, "Draft Fire Code Announced to Enhance Safety Standards for Battery Energy Storage Systems," July 26, 2024, <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/About/Newsroom/2024-Announcements/2024-07-26-Governor-Hochul-Announces-Draft-Fire-Code-Language-That-Addresses-Recommendations#:~:text=Governor%20Kathy%20Hochul%20today%20announced,is%20done%20safely%20and%20responsibly.%E2%80%9D.>

⁸ Office of the New York State Comptroller, "DiNapoli: Improved Planning Needed for New York To Achieve Its Clean Energy Goals," July 17, 2024, <https://www.osc.ny.gov/press/releases/2024/07/dinapoli-improved-planning-needed-new-york-achieve-its-clean-energy-goals>. And New York Lawyers for the

For example, Germany, with its cloudy days and cool climate expects to generate nearly 15% of its electricity by solar.⁹ While New York State generates a paltry 5%.¹⁰

2. Focus on the least expensive ways to generate electricity, not the most. It is well established that the still-not-commercially-licensed small modular nuclear reactors are the most expensive way to generate electricity, community solar is the least.¹¹ Policies that expand solar use are a far more affordable (and far less dangerous) way to generate power, that that can be achieved through expanded reliance on battery storage. Nuclear power is enormously expensive. Currently, consumers have had their utility rates jacked up about half billion dollars *annually* to subsidize New York's existing nuclear plants.¹²

3. Adopt measures to fight utility rate hikes. New York's residential electricity rates are high, however, relative to the nation's. But that has been true for years. For example in 2018 – the year *before* the state climate law was signed – New York's residential electricity rates were ranked the seventh-highest in the nation.¹³ In 2025, New York was ranked eighth-highest.¹⁴ Still high to be sure, but the impact of the Climate Law's passage didn't make a meaningful difference.

Moreover, the amount of energy generated by wind and solar is still, unfortunately, a very small percentage -- under 10% -- of the total electricity generated in the state.¹⁵ How could such a small percentage substantially drive increases in electricity costs? It can't. The Public Service Commission recently reported that the state's Climate Law affected residential ratepayers' electric bills by less than 10 percent (with a much smaller effect on gas bills).

The current public concerns about the rising costs of energy are not the result of the Climate Law but instead are part of a national trend.¹⁶ Nationally, utilities are scrambling

Public Interest, "Flouting the Law: Major State Agencies Are Ignoring New York's Climate Mandates," <https://www.nylpi.org/flouting-the-law-major-state-agencies-are-ignoring-new-yorks-climate-mandates/>.

⁹ International Energy Association, "Germany," see electricity tab, <https://www.iea.org/countries/germany>.

¹⁰ U.S. Energy Information Association, "New York State Energy Profile," <https://www.eia.gov/state/print.php?sid=NY>.

¹¹ National Public Utilities Council, "The Cheapest Sources of Electricity in the U.S.", <https://www.motive-power.com/ranked-the-cheapest-sources-of-electricity-in-the-u-s#:~:text=By%20leveraging%20these%20funding%20opportunities,a%20big%20role%20in%20LCOE>.

¹² Knauss, T., "New Yorkers may pay billions to keep the state's aging nuclear plants in business," Syracuse Post Standard, August 13, 2025, <https://www.syracuse.com/news/2025/08/new-yorkers-may-pay-billions-to-keep-the-states-aging-nuclear-plants-in-business.html>.

¹³ Positive Change Purchasing Cooperative, "Electricity Rates in Your State," January 8, 2019, <https://positivechangepc.com/electricity-rates-in-your-state-2019/>.

¹⁴ U.S. Energy Information Service, "New York Profile State Profile and Energy Estimates," <https://www.eia.gov/state/?sid=NY>.

¹⁵ New York Office of the State Comptroller, "Renewable Electricity in New York State," August 2023, <https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/reports/pdf/renewable-electricity-in-nys.pdf#:~:text=4%20As%20of%202022%2C%20approximately%2029%20percent,percent%20primarily%20split%20between%20wind%20and%20solar>.

¹⁶ U.S. Energy Information Administration, "U.S. Electricity Prices Continue Steady Increase," May 14, 2025,

to modernize the grid in response to the worsening climate and the resulting heat, storms, floods and other catastrophes as well as the anticipated overload caused by the expansion of data centers.¹⁷ New York can, and must, do more via structural changes to protect consumers – not from clean energy, but from an aging grid and energy "hogs" including cryptocurrency and AI facilities.

Again, New York's energy vision has become distorted. We urge you to follow our recommendations and to keep a clear sight on the states' energy needs.

Sincerely,

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<https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=65284#:~:text=Retail%20electricity%20prices%20have%20increased,increases%20differ%20across%20the%20country>

¹⁷ Energy Central, "Power Under Pressure: Hardening the U.S. Electrical Grid for a Resilient Energy Future," <https://www.energycentral.com/energy-management/post/power-under-pressure-hardening-us-electrical-grid-resilient-energy-future-8xWbhhOZjzAQjtC>.

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