

News Release from NYPIRG & Earthjustice

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As Energy Bills Skyrocket, Sen. Harckham + Advocates Debunk Gov. Hochul's Manufactured Crisis & Faulty Math

Despite Governor's claims, state agencies have already acknowledged that fracked gas and pipes - not our climate law - are the leading cost of utility increases

ALBANY, NY (03/03/2026) (readMedia)-- Today, Earthjustice and NYPIRG held a virtual press conference with Senator Pete Harckham to demand that Governor Hochul and the legislature uphold the state's [Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act \(CLCPA\)](#). Last week, Governor Hochul's administration [circulated a paltry 3 page memo](#) that misrepresented New York's climate law. The memo alleged - with little evidence - that adhering to the state's emissions mandates will cost consumers, and recommended that the state make changes to the Climate Law.

During the press conference, lawmakers and advocates released a detailed memo debunking the New York State Research and Development Authority's (NYSERDA) memo.

[Read the full Earthjustice memo here.](#)

[Watch a recording of the press conference here.](#)

"Let's talk affordability. Here are the facts: the dirty, expensive oil and gas status quo has created a crisis for New Yorkers, and doubling down on more of the same is not going to get us out of it. The governor wants New Yorkers to believe that even though we've hardly done anything to implement CLCPA, it is somehow to blame for rising energy costs. That's nonsense, and everyone knows it. Doing President Trump's dirty work for him by walking back our own climate law will not lower anyone's bills. If we want to break the cycle of skyrocketing energy costs we need to commit to the kinds of bold policies that will finally deliver a cleaner, more efficient, more affordable energy system that works for all New Yorkers," **said Senate Finance Chair Liz Krueger.**

"The New York Independent System Operator recently reported that the reason for high utility prices is natural gas. No mention of CLCPA. Natural gas jumped 50% in price yesterday due to the war in the Middle East. The reason 95% of the world's new energy generation is from renewables is because the market recognizes they are cheaper for consumers, faster to scale and not affected from market disruptions caused by war. Now is the time to double down on renewable energy to lower costs for consumers and increase reliability. Rolling back the CLCPA

will only drive up costs, not lower them," **said Senate Environmental Conservation Chair Pete Harckham.**

Despite the Governor's posturing, undermining the CLCPA will do nothing to address the state's reliance on costly gas, which is the true driver of higher energy bills. Already, [1 in 4 New Yorkers](#) cannot afford their energy bills, and gas prices are at an [all-time high](#). Just over a week ago, the Governor's own Deputy Secretary for Energy even [acknowledged](#) that gas prices are responsible for rising bills, writing that, "*We're seeing rising utility bills that are a direct result of a grid that's more dependent on a single source of fuel than ever before: natural gas. When the global price of gas skyrockets, as it has in the last few weeks, the price of heating homes and powering businesses in New York increases with it.*"

Governor Hochul herself also recently acknowledged the volatility and high price of fossil fuels, with oil prices [expected to jump 10%](#) because of the conflict in Iran. According to [City & State](#), the Governor said, "The Strait of Hormuz is where the vast majority of the world's oil comes through – it's going to have a direct effect on the pump right here in New York state probably in a matter of days, if not hours."

Fossil fuels are not more reliable than renewables. In December 2022, Winter Storm Elliott resulted in power outages due to failing infrastructure. Gas supply was plentiful, but [wells and pipes froze, and cold temperatures affected equipment at fossil fuel power plants](#). The system similarly struggles during heatwaves, leading the [New York Independent System Operator \(NYISO\) to admit](#) that during the June 2025 heatwave, solar and wind outperformed fossil fuels.

"New Yorkers are already facing record-high energy bills, thanks to rising gas costs that are only going up. Rolling back the climate law will do nothing to make life more affordable for the 1 in 4 families already behind on their bills, who the Governor now wants to force to pay for her procrastination. As the federal government decimates science-based climate protections every day, New Yorkers are depending on the Legislature to uphold the climate law and actually deliver real relief now," **said Liz Moran, New York Policy Advocate at Earthjustice.**

"Governor Hochul's vague proposal to roll back our Climate Law by abusing the notoriously opaque budget process is a disservice to all New Yorkers. Failing to act for the last seven years is not an excuse to move the goalposts or overturn this crucial legislation in the cover of darkness. The Legislature should firmly reject the Governor's effort to dismantle our climate laws and force her to make the case without holding the budget process hostage," **said Blair Horner, Senior Policy Advisor at the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG).**

During the press conference, lawmakers and advocates highlighted how the NYSERDA memo is inaccurate and confusing:

- The memo conflates the CLCPA with Cap & Invest which is the Governor's own proposal, not actually required by the law.

- The price of gas is skyrocketing, and rolling back the CLCPA will result in doubling down on gas - making New Yorkers' energy bills even more expensive
- The figures in NYSERDA's memo depart wildly from multiple analyses that show significant savings for New Yorkers from policies that will help achieve the goals set by the climate law

[Read the full memo debunking NYSERDA's claims here.](#)

NYSERDA's memo is the latest example of Governor Hochul's administration baselessly blaming climate regulations for higher utility costs and creating a manufactured crisis. In recent months, the Governor has made a [hard pivot to embrace fossil fuels](#) in the name of "affordability", while ignoring that the real driver of utility increases is the skyrocketing cost of gas and gas pipes.

The Governor's efforts also come as New York leaders have repeatedly failed to follow through on building new clean energy infrastructure. The 175-mile Clean Path NY transmission line, which would bring 1,300 MW into New York City, was [indefinitely delayed](#) by New York's Public Service Commission earlier this year. In addition to delaying Clean Path, in July, the New York State Public Service Commission also [abandoned efforts](#) on a transmission project to connect multiple offshore wind farms to provide clean energy and meet growing demand. That project could have [lowered costs to produce electricity by \\$40 to \\$70 billion from 2033 to 2052](#). That's on top of the approximately 50,000 MW of mostly clean energy projects [stuck in the NYISO generator interconnection queue](#).

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