

ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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June 7, 2022

NYS Climate Action Council Co-Chairs
Honorable Doreen Harris, President & CEO, NYSERDA
Honorable Basil Seggos, Commissioner, NYS DEC
NYSERDA, 17 Columbia Circle
Albany, NY 12203-6399

Dear Honorable NYS Climate Action Council Co-Chairs Harris and Seggos,

We, the undersigned members of the Ulster County Legislature, write to express our support of the New York State Climate Action Council Scoping Plan goals of reducing and eliminating greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) as outlined in the 2019 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (Climate Act). Please accept this letter as our official public comment submission.

The Climate Act committed New York 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.

The New York State Climate Acton Council approved a Draft Scoping Plan to meet these urgent climate and equity goals. The Draft 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.
- 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;
- 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
- 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

Ulster County supports the Integration Analysis for the Scoping Plan which finds 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.

The Ulster County Executive signed an executive order on June 18, 2019, 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.

We hereby affirm 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.

We hereby declare our 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.

We hereby support 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.

We hereby support 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 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.

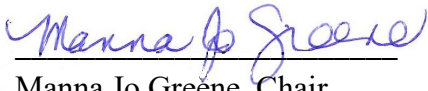
We call on the Climate Action Council to include in the Scoping Plan the necessary policies and support to help owners of existing buildings improve energy efficiency and transition to zero-emissions equipment, ensuring cost parity with fossil systems, with incentives and financing assistance as necessary

We support the Scoping Plan recommendations that make electric vehicles more affordable relative to gas-powered vehicles and expand fast-charging infrastructure and urge the Climate Action Council to include in the Scoping Plan recommendations to expand assistance for all-electric upstate municipal transit systems.

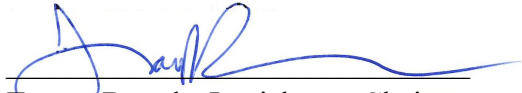
We further urge the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and NYSERDA to immediately launch a sustained statewide public education and information campaign on the benefits of a clean energy economy and climate-friendly choices by consumers of heating and cooling systems, transportation, and products and appliances.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Manna Jo Greene, Chair
Standing Committee on Energy, Environment & Sustainability



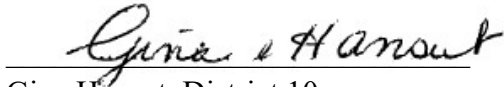
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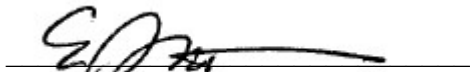
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Cc: Ulster County's State Senate and Assembly Representatives, Ulster County Executive Ryan
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