



**Statement from NYSERDA President & CEO Doreen M. Harris
Regarding the Approval of the Climate Action Council Scoping Plan**

December 19, 2022

My vote is to enthusiastically approve this Climate Action Council Final Scoping Plan.

This plan as presented to the Council upholds three main principles of the work that we have advanced throughout this almost three-year process:

Principle 1: Climate Action

This plan demonstrates that climate action is not only necessary, but that delay is to be avoided. Delaying climate action has been shown to cost New Yorkers more. Therefore, I am in favor of undertaking this action now so that we may begin delivering additional benefits to the New Yorkers we are acting on behalf of.

As we implement our climate actions, certainly we will consider the on-the-ground issues and immediate costs and concerns of citizens and businesses. This is how we implement policy in New York every day and will continue to do so.

But our eye is on the prize and we in New York are wise to take climate action and have it serve as a model to the rest of the country.

Principle 2: Climate Justice

We have a plan that demonstrates how success can only be claimed when we have been able to advance and implement our climate action in a manner that addresses the issues of past decisions.

Historically, underserved communities have not been included in the dialogue and that must change. Underserved communities have also not had sufficient access to clean energy in housing, education and career opportunities and that must also change.

This plan is demonstrating how all disciplines around this table – Energy, Environment, Education, Transportation, Labor, Health, Housing, Industry, Agriculture – have responsibilities to make sure that justice is an equal outcome to the changes in our day-in, day-out business operations.

To put it simply, business as usual is no longer an option.

Principle 3: Climate Economy

I do agree with comments made at previous meetings that the economic opportunities we are looking to create through our climate planning have often been an unspoken undercurrent in this process.

We simply do not succeed if our state economy is not better off for our activities in advancing this plan. I am beyond enthusiastic about the new industries and career opportunities that we are creating in New York. And, as a product of Upstate New York myself I have never seen the level of opportunity that is at our doorstep in all parts of the state.



But that is not to discount the attention that must be paid to New Yorkers – particularly my energy colleagues and workers – that will need to find their new opportunities in our decarbonizing economy. I pledge that I will do what I can to make sure we create all those opportunities and more so that you too can become part of the more than 200,000 jobs that we stand to gain.

I must note that I am not blindly optimistic about this undertaking and what it will take to achieve our goals. I admit that even my eyes were opened when I saw the first output of the Integration Analysis and better understood the nature of challenges facing not only New York – but the entire country – if not the world.

My own personal takeaway from this planning process has been to understand that this is not about advancing a few new programs to achieve the goals of the Climate Act. We will truly need to advance transformative cross-cutting new initiatives to work to the scale of activity that the Climate Act requires of us.

Even as we look to potential options for transitional activity under any scenario, we must move to definitive outcomes, and I feel this plan starts us on that pathway. And we must be especially focused in the near term on the challenges associated with the mid-transition period when resources and solutions are ramping up to their ultimate scale.

While we always prefer to focus on what is happening within our New York borders, we must realize we are taking on global environmental challenges, looking to influence international consumer markets, creating education and career opportunities for hundreds of thousands of people so that they can provide for their families and actively participate in their communities.

I hear many statements that “the world is looking at us.” I want to make sure that in addition to this priority, “the world is coming along with us.” So, as we look to our own state programs, I will be making sure that the value that we’re looking to provide to New Yorkers comes with the value that New Yorkers will depend upon from our colleagues at the federal government, our colleagues in state government, our industry, and community partners.

My vote for this plan is about making sure we make measurable progress to achieve our state principles. Our actions will launch new innovations in markets and technologies, some of which we do not yet understand how they will be integrated into our thinking. And that should be our emphasis here: we are progressing, and we will be learning. And we will put that learning to the test in the next generation of our planning process.

I must conclude my statement with sincere words of thanks.

Thank you to my Climate Action Council Co-Chair Commissioner Seggos and our twenty Council colleagues for working through this multi-year process and for your insights and guidance. And a special thank you to the Climate Action Council’s Executive Director, Sarah Osgood, for expertly navigating and leading this effort throughout. Thank you also to the army of state colleagues that are engaged in the fight to mitigate the impact of emissions and adapt to a changing environment. Your efforts do not go unnoticed, and the citizens of New York are ever more aware of your professional expertise, your commitment to public service and to the sacrifices you have made to make New York a better place. And finally, thank you to the tens of thousands of New Yorkers who participated in myriad ways throughout this process; your comments, letters, and engagement have absolutely impacted this process and the plan it has produced for the better.

And if there is ever a place that is going to lead the way on solving climate change, it is New York – I’m certain of that.