

December 19, 2022

Statement of New York Climate Action Council Member Raya Salter, Founder and Executive Director of the Energy Justice Law & Policy Center, on the Final New York State Climate Action Council Scoping Plan

“My name is Raya Salter and I’m the founder and executive director of the Energy Justice Law & Policy Center. I was appointed to this Council by Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins.

I wish to thank the Majority Leader, the co-chairs of the Council, the Executive Director of the Council, and all of the state officials who led the development of this Plan.

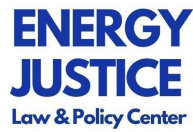
The true credit for this Plan belongs to the thousands of activists across New York who have rallied, marched, wrote letters and demanded that this be the people’s plan. In 2019 I stood with activists not far from where we sit now, who shut down then-Governor Cuomo’s office in an action to demand the passage of what ultimately became the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. It is that law that required this process and plan.

The release of this final Scoping Plan is a landmark moment for climate action in New York State. The Plan, if implemented, will guide New York towards a just energy transition and away from fossil fuels.

I was a member of the Council’s Gas Transition Subgroup and worked on the Scoping Plan’s vision to retire fossil fuel plants and decarbonize the buildings sector. It includes a blueprint for the retirement of New York City’s most-polluting fossil fuel plants and their sites by 2030 that will inform broader planning to retire fossil fuel plants throughout the State. This is a win for environmental justice.

Another win is the Plan’s framework for New York’s gas system transition that will adhere to the State’s emissions targets, prioritize affordability, health and frontline communities while ensuring a just transition for the gas industry workforce.

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The Plan is not perfect. Ideas for market-based “cap and invest,” and biofuels schemes should be rejected if they can’t overcome design flaws and stakeholder concerns. While the state’s climate law should ultimately prohibit the use of most “alternative fuels,” like “renewable natural gas” and hydrogen for use in pipelines on an emissions basis, the Plan is wrong to contemplate these false solutions. Likewise, looks into so-called “advanced-nuclear” are a dangerous distraction.

The Scoping Plan, however, provides a comprehensive approach to reaching the state’s nation-leading climate goals with a focus on justice and equity. The next step is to see it fully implemented.

For these reasons, I vote yes to approve the final New York State Climate Action Council Scoping Plan.”

Raya Salter, Member, NYS Climate Action Council and Founder, Energy Justice Law & Policy Center is an energy and climate justice attorney, activist, grassroots organizer and Founder and Executive Director of the Energy Justice Law and Policy Center, the first public interest law and policy center in the US dedicated to Energy Justice. She is an adjunct professor at Cardozo law school, is widely published on matters of energy regulation and is the editor of "Energy Justice" (2018). She was appointed to the Council by Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins. Raya’s bio is [linked here](#).