

June 22, 2022

NYS Climate Action Council
Draft Scoping Plan Comments
NYSERDA
17 Columbia Circle
Albany, NY 12203-6399

Dear Members of the Climate Action Council:

Over my time as a Senior Assistant Public Defender and Associate Attorney in private practice in criminal and family law, I have helped hundreds of people for whom the system simply does not work. Some were born with no real shot at what many New Yorkers would consider a “normal life.” Many have been exposed to drugs and alcohol at a young age, others have mental health issues throughout their short lives, and some are intellectually disadvantaged. They represent the other side of the “gap” – the achievement gap, the socio-economic gap, etc.

Nothing enlivens your spirit more than helping these folks overcome obstacles most of us would never understand and grow into successful, thriving New Yorkers. One of the major steps toward accomplishing this is gaining access to reliable transportation. Owning a vehicle means you can make it to your court hearings, mental health appointment, court-appointed meetings, visits with children, or school. It means you can get treatment. It means you can make it to your job interview. It means you can attend court when you need to.

I am writing to you today because I believe the Climate Action Council’s Draft Scoping Plan sets yet another obstacle for the men and women I work with. Specifically, the Draft Scoping Plan accelerates the State’s ban on the sale of new internal combustion vehicles in favor of EVs by 2030, a 5-year acceleration.

While I applaud the goal of removing internal combustion vehicles from New York’s roads, the timeline here is simply unreasonable and will drive up the costs for the people who can afford it least. This plan is likely to detrimentally impact the disadvantaged people I work with every day. EVs are considerably more expensive than internal combustion vehicles for the time being and the foreseeable future. Moreover, even if people on the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum were to acquire an EV, access to charging stations is far from equitable at this time.

I appreciate what the Climate Action Council is attempting to accomplish with its Draft Scoping Plan. But it is unworkable in its current form. For the reasons stated above, I reject it.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Adriana E. Vega, Esq.