

To the Climate Action Council:

I am a resident of Garrison, NY, a Sierra Club volunteer, and a member of the Climatesmart Phillipstown Task Force. First, I want to express my appreciation. It is difficult to overstate the importance of the work that you have undertaken on behalf of NYS citizens. The scope of the research, analysis, and synthesis required to create the Draft Scoping Plan is evident throughout the document, which lays the groundwork for the implementation of the ground-breaking CLCPA. Your recommendations will shape policy for years to come, and be a decisive factor in whether or not NYS is able to fulfill the mandates of its climate law and move toward a safe and healthy future.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to speak at the Peekskill CAC hearing, and I will not repeat those comments here. I am writing today to respond to some of the comments that were made that afternoon by people who oppose the CLCPA and the Climate Action Council's draft scoping plan. I am increasingly disturbed by the disinformation campaign and fear-mongering undertaken by the fossil fuel industry and its supporters. I urge the CAC to recognize their specious claims for what they are – a desperate attempt by a dying industry to extract every last penny they can, while endangering the health and well-being of everyone else on the planet -- and stand firm in your support of our climate law.

CLCPA opponents claim that transitioning to a clean energy economy will lead to a net loss of good-paying jobs. This is simply untrue. Workers employed by the fossil fuel industry will have to prepare for change and in some cases retraining, and there is no question that this will be hard, and they will require support. But the growth of the clean energy economy is already leading to new job opportunities. An excellent example is the collaboration between labor, utilities, and environmental advocates embodied in the Utility Thermal Energy Network and Jobs Act, just passed by the NYS legislature. This collaboration is a blueprint for the sort of collaborative project that could provide many thousands of union jobs as we build out the clean economy.

New York's offshore wind industry is another example of how the transition to clean energy has led to the creation of large numbers of new union jobs. The collaboration between labor, the wind industry, and climate/environmental justice groups has resulted in exemplary labor standards. In addition, a union-led

training center has created a highly skilled workforce that will help NY meet its clean energy goals. The scoping plan should build on these precedents and require strong labor standards for all state funded projects.

It is also important to consider the loss of employment that will inevitably result from failing to take immediate action to reduce harmful emissions and avert the worst effects of climate change. NY's agricultural industry will be highly vulnerable, as will our tourism/hospitality industry. Trying to protect the jobs of fossil fuel workers at the cost of so many others makes no sense.

CLCPA opponents claim that electrifying homes will make them more expensive to build, and that consumers will be "forced" to pay more for homes. The opposite is true. A recent study by the National Building Initiative and NRDC showed that it costs significantly less (at least 7500K) to build a new all-electric home in New York than to build a baseline gas-powered home. In addition to the cost benefits, transitioning our homes and buildings off fossil fuels is absolutely central to meeting the CLCPA's climate mandates, as buildings account for a whopping 30% of GHG emissions in NYS. With this in mind the CAC should follow New York City's lead and set a firm timeline for phasing out gas in new construction throughout the state.

CLCPA opponents say that a clean electric grid will not be reliable. We are in the midst of an industrial revolution, and it is essential that state agencies like the PSC and the DEC (or an entirely new entity) aggressively oversee the complex transition away from fossil fuel power generation towards renewable energy. If the transition is carefully monitored and overseen, our energy sources will be reliable. The technology exists and is being rapidly deployed. New solutions are emerging all the time. The final scoping plan should ensure adequate government oversight so that this transition is orderly and equitable, and the electric grid is reliable for all New Yorkers.

Finally, my utility, Central Hudson, recently sent out a notification stating that "all emission reduction solutions should be on the table." They are arguing that a solution like green hydrogen, which is costly and inefficient to produce, is just as viable a solution as wind and solar. Or that moving from one fossil fuel to a somewhat less destructive one (i.e. oil to propane) for home heating should be considered an emissions reduction strategy. Or that replacing an aging fossil fuel

power plant with an updated, more-efficient gas plant is a great way to reduce emissions...

While there will probably be specific situations where fuels like green hydrogen and RNG are the best available options, for the most part these are false solutions, designed to prolong our dependence on fossil fuels with their damaging emissions and dangerous, leak-prone infrastructure. Central Hudson's position that all solutions should be on the table is based in flagrant, irresponsible climate denial. The latest reports by the IPCC have made the reality of our climate crisis abundantly clear. We have nearly run out of time and must take immediate, drastic actions to slash emissions. The Climate Action Council has recognized this reality and created a roadmap to move us toward a safe, sustainable future. I implore you to stand your ground, protect what we have, and do all you can to ensure that our children and grandchildren can live long, healthy lives on this extraordinary planet.

With thanks for your consideration,

Martha Upton



Garrison, NY