



COUNTY OF ERIE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT & PLANNING
**** MEMORANDUM ****

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FROM: Nicole Morris-McLaughlin (Senior Energy Development Specialist) Erie County
TO: New York State Climate Action Council
DATE: April 29, 2022
RE: Comments from DEP on Draft NYS Climate Scoping Plan

New York's Climate Action Council's public hearings to gather input from the public on the Draft NYS Climate Scoping Plan was held at the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library on Wednesday April 27, 2022. Below are the comments that Nicole Morris-McLaughlin submitted at the event.

My name is Nicole Morris-McLaughlin and I work for Erie County in the Department of Environment and Planning. I manage a program called ECLIPSE- Erie County Low-Income Program for Sustainable Energy.

The scope of this program is to swiftly transition the region to clean energy through Community Choice Aggregation (CCA), Community Solar and other local clean energy solutions such as district systems and microgrids with battery storage.

We plan to do all this while making sure the county's Disadvantaged Communities are first in line to the benefits of the region transitioning to clean energy. Why prioritize Disadvantaged Communities? Because, Disadvantaged Communities bear the brunt of negative health effects associated with burning fossil fuels, they are exposed to high levels of environmental pollution, and the worst impacts of climate change.

Erie County strongly supports the Climate Action Council's Components of the Strategy to Promote Community Choice Aggregation. Community Choice Aggregation programs allow municipalities to make bulk power purchases on behalf of participating homes and businesses in their jurisdiction, making it easier for residents and employers to benefit from local clean energy projects, while also improving project economics and advancing the Climate Act requirements.

We support these solutions:

1. Expand Community Choice Aggregation Eligibility: DPS should enable county governments to authorize and form Community Choice Aggregation programs with local opt-out.
 - o *Allowing county governments to authorize and form Community Choice Aggregation programs with local opt-out would empower Erie County to lead the way to efficiently and swiftly transition the region to clean, affordable energy. This would have wide-ranging health benefits for the region and would create green jobs.*
2. Support Community Choice Aggregation and Community Distributed Initiatives: NYSERDA should continue to encourage development of Community Choice

Aggregation programs where communities choose 100% renewable energy as the default supply, and where participants are automatically enrolled in Community Solar.

- *We especially see Opt-Out Community Solar as a way to prioritize Disadvantaged Communities by automatically enrolling our low-income residents first and allowing them to benefit from the guaranteed electric bill savings that Community Solar brings.*
3. Enable Microgrids and District Systems: NYSERDA should work with counties, municipalities, neighborhoods, schools and private businesses to enable the development of clean energy microgrids and district systems.
- *Microgrids, particularly with battery storage can be a means to manage and reduce energy use and costs.*
 - *Microgrids and clean energy district systems bring equity building opportunities to Disadvantaged Communities*
 - *Microgrids increase resiliency to natural and manmade disasters.*

In Conclusion, help empower us at the County level along with our Community Partners to transition in a way that allows us to prioritize our Disadvantaged Communities and puts the well-being of our residents at the forefront of our solutions.

Thank you.