Scoping Plan Comments

July 1, 2022

[Sustainable Finger Lakes](http://sustainablefingerlakes.org/) (formerly [Sustainable Tompkins](http://sustainabletompkins.org/)) is a citizen-based nonprofit active since 2004 on climate and energy issues. Our Finger Lakes Climate Fund may be the oldest local carbon offset program in the country and uniquely combines emission reductions with offset grants to low-income households to pay for efficiency measures like insulation, air sealing, and heat pumps.

We have signed onto numerous comments on the Scoping Plan along with other groups, but wish to quickly add a few summary thoughts. First, we commend the work of the Climate Action Council for their thorough and robust efforts to lay out a plan for reaching the goals of the CLCPA. We are full of gratitude for your work. Second, we recommend that the Plan take a stronger stand on eliminating all subsidies and incentives that directly or indirectly result in climate-harming emissions or other negative environmental impacts. This especially includes agriculture systems, but also includes choices like restricting hydropower allocations only to power residential and institutional sectors and prevent misallocation to activities like bitcoin mining.

For the Climate Adaptation chapter, we need to be more specific about the funding needs to upgrade our infrastructure to be more resilient to climate impacts. We especially need robust funding to address stormwater runoff with more green infrastructure that can bring other co-benefits with it.

For the Ag and Forestry chapter, we would like to see a similar emphasis on funding activities with multiple co-benefits. We are already spending too many taxpayer dollars on one-off practices with limited benefits, such as the millions spent on large dairy CAFOs for winter cover crops. Instead, our limited tax dollars should be restricted to funding the transition to regenerative practices like rotational grazing and silvopasture, or for more permanent solutions like purchased conservation easements to maintain wide riparian buffers or the installation of retention basins to keep tile drainage in place to recharge aquifers, absorb nutrients, and prevent stormwater surges in the public’s roadside ditches that also end up causing harmful algae blooms in our lakes.

Society has waited too long and been slowed by special interests in addressing climate change. There will not be enough money to address all the problems that are coming at us now. Therefore, we need the political courage to spend our tax dollars on actions that can address multiple issues at once. We must direct our tax dollars to get the process of reform and transition going in building electrification, transportation, and agriculture. But we also must face the reality that we will need to pass new statewide mandates on building energy efficiency and agricultural practices that penalize problematic patterns. We will need both carrots and sticks to reach our very necessary climate action goals.