My name is Walter Simpson. Before retirement, I was Energy Officer for the SUNY Buffalo for 26 years. I led a nationally recognized campus energy conservation program that saved over $100 million. I wrote a how-to manual on how campuses could achieve carbon neutrality. My wife and I live in Amherst, N.Y. in an energy net-zero home. I learned about climate change in 1980 and soon began educating students and the public about it and pushing for action.

The decarbonization strategy of “electrifying everything” (or as much as possible) and then meeting electric needs with renewable energy appears to be the right one. But it can’t be accomplished while keeping fossil fuels cheap or permitting new fossil fuel installations.

When we electrify all buildings – new and existing – and all vehicles, these giant new electric loads, plus an anticipated increased air conditioning load, will cause electricity demand to skyrocket.

Wasteful electric resistance space heating, which should be severely and explicitly restricted, has the potential to make matters even worse.

Utility-scale renewables will only be able to meet burgeoning future grid loads if we simultaneously implement new and much more effective energy conservation programs and efficiency measures. Electric loads must be sharply reduced or nuclear power is likely to have a resurgence.

As we face accelerated climate change, we should abandon policies that would reduce incentives when “grid parity” is achieved. Grid parity is irrelevant. What is important is getting the job done. What we need now are vastly increased incentives across the board – for conservation and efficiency as well as for solar, wind, heat pumps etc. Hydrogen, too, in certain applications will need a push.

Finally, our climate plan must target all existing buildings with deep energy conservation and rooftop solar retrofits. To accomplish this, we need a Climate Conservation Corps that will provide tens of thousands of jobs.