**My name is Lynn Saxton.** I live in Warsaw, in Wyoming County, and I am the co-chair of the Western New York Chapter of the Climate Reality Project. I am a retired High School Social Studies teacher and a grandmother of 3 who has turned to climate activism for the future of my grandchildren and former students. Buildings are the largest cause of greenhouse gas emissions here in New York State. I supported the All Electric Buildings Act, which I hope will pass in future sessions. As the owner of a ground-source heat pump for the past 11 years, I know firsthand that electric heat works well and inexpensively.

**Utility thermal networks**

In order to effectively decarbonize our buildings at the scale necessary to meet the CLCPA’s timeline, we need to build out emissions-free thermal energy networks that share heat sinks and sources and utilize high efficiency ground source heat pumps over the next two-decades across the state. Utility-scale thermal networks can connect multiple buildings together and capitalize on thermal energy exchange using sources like geothermal boreholes, surface water and even wastewater.

Thermal energy networks will scale building decarbonization and reduce costs for customers with little impact to the electric grid even during peak periods. Utilities will be able to reduce the costs of electrifying buildings by spreading the costs of thermal networks across many customers and many years. These networks also offer a clear pathway for workers with pipe skills to transition to thermal energy networks for all-electric buildings.

In order to streamline a rapid roll out of utility thermal networks, to keep customer costs down, and to simultaneously smoothen the phaseout of gas, the cost of utility thermal networks must be added to the gas rate base. A neighborhood-by-neighborhood plan of replacing aging gas infrastructure with thermal energy networks will help transition buildings from gas to electric heating while keeping the size of the infrastructure as well as the number of supporting ratepayers more or less constant. This will not only help the new customers of these networks, but will also help prevent the delivery rates for existing gas customers from spiraling upwards.

Thank you for your hard work and dedication to the implementation of the CLCPA. I hope you will resist the fossil fuel propaganda that is currently filling our airwaves.