



Governor Kathy Hochul 2025 Climate Report Card

This is Climate Can't Wait's second annual report card on Governor Kathy Hochul. Governor Hochul received a D- on her 2024 report card. Shockingly, this year, she did even worse. An F implies that she did nothing. But her performance was worse than nothing, backsliding on meeting the mandates of New York's 2019 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA or Climate Law).

In October of 2025, the New York State Supreme Court ruled that Governor Hochul is breaking the law in refusing to issue regulations to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Under the cover of an "all of the above energy plan," she has cut solar funding and failed to scale

New York State Climate Report Card

Governor Kathy Hochul — 2025 Final Grade F

COURSE	GRADE	COMMENTS
GHG REDUCTIONS	F	Illegally delayed regulations and emission reductions are inadequate
ELECTRIC GENERATION	D	Cut funding. Not meeting the state's renewable electric generation goals
CLIMATE JUSTICE	F	No state plan to implement climate justice goals
CLIMATE FUNDING	D	Climate funding is totally inadequate
LEGISLATIVE ACTION	F	Has no legislative agenda of her own and rejected Legislature's proposals for climate action
AGENCY ACTION	F	Has not ensured that state agencies comply with the Climate Law

Hochul's Climate Timeline

1/16/25 Hochul omits NY HEAT from state budget, reversing her prior support for the bill

1/16/25 Hochul proposes a \$1 billion Sustainable Future Fund for climate action, a small portion of the estimated \$10 billion a year called for through the Scoping Plan process

2/7/25 Hochul's DEC approves air permits for a massive expansion of the aging Iroquois fracked gas pipeline

4/24/25 PSC announces \$271 million in cuts to the successful NY-Sun program slowing the building of solar and causing major job losses

6/22/25 Hochul directs NYPA to construct a 1 gigawatt new nuclear reactor

7/18/25 NYSERDA announces major cuts to the successful EmPower+ program which provides home energy efficiency upgrades

8/6/25 PSC proposes to extend ratepayer subsidies for Constellation's four upstate nuclear reactors to 2049 with an estimated price of \$33 billion

11/7/25 DEC approves permits for the Williams NESE Pipeline that was rejected three times previously

11/7/25 DEC approves permit for the Greenidge fracked gas-fired power plant on Seneca Lake

11/12/25 Hochul delays implementation of the All-Electric Buildings Act, and calls for it to be reconsidered

12/1/25 Hochul appeals a State Supreme Court ruling that she violated the Climate Law and must release the greenhouse gas emissions regulations

12/16/25 The New York State Energy Planning Board approves a NYS Energy Master Plan that ignores Climate Law mandates and prioritizes fossil fuels and nuclear over renewable energy

12/19/25 Hochul signs 100-foot rule bill into law, only a portion of the NY HEAT Act and delays implementation for a year

12/23/25 NYSERDA announces funding restored for EmPower+ after outcry from advocates

up renewables, halted the implementation of laws like the All-Electric Buildings Act, and approved fossil fuel pipelines. Hochul did approve the 100-foot rule legislation, only a portion of the NY HEAT Act. She also dedicated \$1 billion over a multi-year period to the Sustainable Future Fund, a baby step that is totally inadequate to meet the true cost of cutting GHG emissions and to transition to a renewable energy economy. And the day before Christmas, NYSERDA announced it would restore funding for EmPower+ after pressure from climate advocates.

As fossil-fueled extreme weather shatters records and devastates communities, the Trump regime is going all out on “drill baby drill”, most recently promoting coal mining on public lands, cancelling wind power projects, cutting funding for renewables, and shutting down the National Center for Atmospheric Research. New York State, with the eleventh largest economy in the world, must take a leadership role and increase our efforts for a just transition from fossil fuels to clean renewable energy.

Solar and wind, combined with battery storage, are now the least costly and cleanest forms of energy. This is an opportunity to lower costs for New Yorkers as we reduce local and global emissions. Governor Hochul says her top concern is affordability, but her proposals to delay and weaken New York’s Climate Law and spend billions on new gas infrastructure and nuclear energy will cause utility bills to skyrocket. Further, she has obstructed legislative proposals that would have addressed energy affordability.

Governor Hochul’s grade in this report card is based on six categories. Categories 1 to 3 grade her performance in meeting the major mandates of the Climate Law: meeting GHG reduction goals; meeting targets for renewable electric energy generation; and ensuring that at least 35% (with a goal of 40%) of new funding for climate and energy efficiency benefit disadvantaged communities. Categories 4 to 6 grade her leadership in ensuring that climate action is addressed by the state: did she provide adequate annual funding, did she put together a legislative package, and did she order her state agencies to do what is necessary to implement the Climate Law?

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1. Climate Law Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Goals

Grade: F

The Climate Law requires an 85% reduction in climate-destroying GHG emissions in New York below 1990 levels by 2050, with a 40% reduction by 2030. The [state’s own most recent emissions report, issued in 2025](#), said that, as of 2023, emissions were reduced by only 14.8%; meaning that the state was only 23% towards its 2030 target as of that year. This year, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) and the Department of Public Service (DPS) projected that the [40% GHG reduction goal will not be met until 2037 or 2038](#) – a delay of seven to eight years past the deadline.

It is not an accident that New York is behind: government inaction and delay are the main reasons. Particularly disturbing was the conscious decision by Governor Hochul and her administration to postpone implementation of legislative mandates and, in one case, to blatantly violate the law. Even though the Climate Law explicitly requires the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to issue regulations by January 1, 2024 (Environmental Conservation Law § 75-0109) to “ensure” the achievement of the GHG emissions limits, the Governor this year refused to even propose completed regulations to establish a cap-and-invest system, the primary method that the administration selected in the [Climate Law’s Scoping Plan](#) to meet the Climate Law GHG reduction mandates. An Albany Supreme Court decision, *Citizen Action of New*

York vs. DEC, found that the Hochul administration's failure to issue GHG reduction regulations was illegal. (The other plaintiffs are Sierra Club, WE ACT for Environmental Justice and PUSH Buffalo).

In addition, Hochul and her agencies in 2025 delayed implementation of the All-Electric Buildings Act, even though buildings are the largest source of GHG emissions in New York State; approved the Williams NESE pipeline; and approved a permit for a gas-fired power plant on Seneca Lake. Finally, instead of making a good-faith effort to comply with the *Citizen Action* decision, DEC appealed the decision and the Governor has signaled that she may seek to weaken the Climate Law in the 2026 legislative session, ensuring that the state will fall even further behind in meeting its climate commitments.

2. Climate Law Electric Generation Goals and Renewable Transition Grade: D

The Climate Law mandates that 70% of electricity must come from renewable energy sources by 2030, and that 100% must come from zero-emission sources by 2040. [A June 2024 report by DPS and NYSERDA](#) found that the 70% renewable energy target for electricity will likely be delayed by three years. This is borne out by the [most recent publicly available data released by New York State](#), which finds that the state has achieved a 25% renewable rate, measured by the renewable projects actually in operation.

[A July 2024 report by the State Comptroller](#) provides part of the reason for the failure to reach the Climate Law's renewable energy targets. The report found that the Public Service Commission (PSC) and NYSERDA did not adequately plan, monitor, implement and assess the risks and challenges to meet the targets. The Governor has also failed to require agencies to aggressively advance solar, wind and other renewable energy sources. Finally, the administration has made several decisions to permit new fracked gas infrastructure or to delay shutting down existing fracked gas facilities, making it even less likely New York will achieve the Climate Law's 2030 targets.

3. Climate Justice: Equity and State Agency Mandates

Grade: F

The “investment mandate” of the Climate Law requires that at least 35% (with a goal of 40%) of new climate and energy efficiency funding must benefit Black and Brown and/or low-income communities (called “disadvantaged communities” or “DACs” in the Climate Law). Climate Law section 7 requires agencies to ensure that DACs are not disproportionately burdened by new projects subject to permits as well as contracts, and grants; and that decisions as to projects, contracts, and grants not be inconsistent with the Climate Law's GHG emissions targets.

[Reports issued in 2024](#) and [2025](#) found that four top state agencies, the Departments of Health, Education and Transportation and the Empire State Development Corporation, have failed to fully implement section 7 of the Climate Law, and it appears that other agencies, including the PSC, are also ignoring these mandates, or, at a minimum, have provided no or inadequate documentation as to their progress in doing so. The reports said that only a “handful” of state agencies have even issued regulations or guidance to agency staff on how to comply with the section 7 mandates. The Governor must ensure that state agencies fully implement these critical provisions. Examples of mechanisms she can use are budget and agency directives, guidance documents, and executive orders.

4. Funding the Transition to Renewables

Grade: D

Climate groups, local government officials, and state agencies all agree that the state needs billions of dollars annually to ensure that the Climate Law's emissions reduction limits are met, to fast track the transition to renewable energy, and to benefit disadvantaged communities. Federal funding for climate has been radically cut, and existing sources of state revenue, such as the Environmental Bond Act, the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), and utility surcharges are either inadequate or not strategically targeted to meet the Climate Law goals. Despite the need, the Governor, who has the primary responsibility for proposing and passing the state budget, has failed to propose significant new revenue initiatives to fund climate, other than a cap-and-invest program. And, as stated above, she has broken her promise to implement cap-and-invest.

Moreover, Governor Hochul has failed to advance bills proposed by the Legislature that would make funds available for climate action. Two prominent examples are the Stop Climate Polluter Handouts Act (S3606/A3675) that would end more than \$300 million in existing subsidies to the fossil fuel industry, and a multi-bill program championed by the Invest in Our New York (IONY) coalition to increase state revenues for climate and other urgent state priorities. The only positive in her otherwise bleak performance in this area is her proposal – enacted by the Legislature through the 2025-26 budget – to establish the Sustainable Future Program, which will provide \$1 billion in climate funding for a multi-year period. However, the \$1 billion amount is a tiny percentage of what the state itself has estimated is needed.

5. Legislative Action

Grade: F

Governor Hochul did not propose a single significant bill to help implement the Climate Law in 2025. She only reacted to the legislature's piecemeal proposals, frequently obstructed them, or proposed weakening amendments. One notable example is the New York Home Energy and Affordability Act or the NY HEAT Act, which was advanced by numerous advocates due to the lack of action by the PSC to implement the Climate Law. NY HEAT would have modified the current "obligation to serve" gas, mandated gas transition plans for each utility and capped energy costs for low and moderate income utility customers. Hochul opposed NY HEAT, insisting that only one provision – the 100-foot rule modification – be considered as a separate bill. (The 100-foot rule bill did pass both houses and was ultimately signed by the Governor.)

Overall, Governor Hochul did virtually nothing to advance any of the climate bills on the *Climate Can't Wait 2025 Policy Agenda* – a collection of many of the bills with the most support from climate advocacy organizations:

- **Accelerate Solar for Affordable Power** (ASAP) raises New York's distributed solar capacity goal to 20 gigawatts by 2035 and enacts reforms to the utility interconnection process. (A8758/S6570)
- **Bucks for Boilers** provides subsidies to enable households to repair and weatherize their homes and to transition to heat pumps. (A6489/S3476)
- The **Green Affordable Pre-electrification Fund** or GAP Fund bill provides funding and technical assistance to transition homes and buildings to electrification. A portion of the funding was included in the final New York State budget. (A2101/S3315)
- A bill on **Intervention in Utility Cases** permits expense reimbursement for consumers and advocates

participating in PSC proceedings. This bill was vetoed by the Governor in 2023 and 2024 passed the Assembly this year. (A836/S2477)

- **NY HEAT** aligns PSC utility regulation with Climate Law mandates including modifying the current obligation to serve; requires gas transition plans for each utility; and ends ratepayer subsidies for new gas hookups. (A4870/S4158)
- The **Packaging Reduction & Recycling Infrastructure Act** (PRRIA) requires companies to reduce their product packaging by 30% in twelve years. It passed in the Senate. (A1749/S1464)
- The **Renewable Capitol Act** requires the Capitol and other state-owned buildings in downtown Albany to transition to renewable energy within three years. (A3466/S4842)
- The **Stop Climate Polluter Handouts Act** eliminates over \$300 million in tax handouts to the oil and gas industries. (A3675/S3606)

2025 was also a bad year for the Legislature on climate. Of the bills identified as priorities by Climate Can't Wait, only the stripped down version of the NY HEAT Act (i.e., 100-foot rule bill) passed in both the Assembly and Senate. The Senate also passed PRRIA and included a few important climate bills in their budget proposal. Given the Governor's failures as documented in this report card, Climate Can't Wait calls on the Senate and Assembly to take a greater leadership role on climate in 2026.

6. State Agency Action

Grade: F

State agencies answer to Governor Hochul. Instead of directing her agencies to obey the law and develop regulations or legislative proposals to meet our climate goals, she has promoted an “all of the above” strategy promoting climate warming, fracked gas and dangerous nuclear energy to the detriment of affordable, clean renewable energy. Here are some of her major failures in the area of agency action:

- DEC has failed to issue its cap-and-invest regulations. It has also approved a massive expansion of gas infrastructure: an expansion of the Iroquois Pipeline, a new Williams NESE pipeline (previously disapproved) and the Greenidge Powerplant. These actions are totally counter to the goals of reducing GHG emissions and transitioning the state energy grid to renewables.
- The Governor has failed to adequately implement section 7 of the Climate Law, which provides steps all state agencies must undertake to consider climate and climate justice impacts when making agency decisions on permits, grants and contracts. Further, while we have not done a thorough search, Climate Can't Wait is unaware of any state agency which has complied with section 8 of the Climate Law that authorizes and arguably mandates all state agencies and authorities to “promulgate regulations to contribute to achieving the statewide greenhouse gas emissions limits.”
- The PSC has not adequately used its broad authority over state utilities that furnish gas and electricity to consumers and businesses to advance the Climate Law’s GHG reduction and renewable energy mandates. Examples of missed opportunities are continuing to permit new gas infrastructure, failing to adopt plans for all utilities to rapidly shut down existing gas infrastructure, and (as noted above), the failure to adequately implement sections 7 and 8 of the Climate Law.
- NYSERDA is aggressively pursuing new nuclear reactors, the most unaffordable and polluting energy technology in the world, including partnering with Constellation to build new nuclear plants and co-

leading a ten state consortium to advance nuclear energy,

- The Department of State's State Fire Prevention and Buildings Codes Council is responsible for promulgating the regulations to implement the All-Electric Buildings Act. The Council released regulations to implement the law but Governor Hochul, in an apparent nod to industry, delayed implementation and indicated an interest in scaling back the law.
- The New York Power Authority (NYPA) is required to build public renewables under the Build Public Renewables Act, passed in 2023. NYPA backtracked and cut 1.5 gigawatts of public renewables from its updated strategic plan, proposing to build an inadequate 5.6 gigawatts when the state needs to build 15 gigawatts by 2030 to meet its legally mandated climate goals. In addition, the New York State Capitol and Empire State Plaza are heated and cooled by a NYPA-run polluting powerplant in the disadvantaged community of Sheridan Hollow. NYPA plans to “look at” a thermal energy network for the Capitol but not for ten years. Further, there is no plan to shut down the plant.
- The recently released State Energy Master Plan ignores the mandates of the Climate Law and the recommendations in the 2022 CLCPA Scoping Plan. The plan scales back renewable energy development, continues a dependence on gas and oil, accelerates nuclear energy, and delays the requirement of a 40% reduction in GHG emissions until 2037 at the earliest.

Recommendations

For Governor Hochul to improve her report card grade next year she must simply obey the law! She must build clean affordable renewable energy and cut GHG emissions across all sectors of the state economy with the urgency required by the climate crisis. She must stop using “affordability” as an excuse to delay cost-saving investment in renewables. Governor Hochul has the ability and power to be a true climate leader and show the nation that climate solutions are possible, affordable, and good for our communities. Our children deserve nothing less.

“Young people were born into this world that is being destroyed by emissions that we were not alive to witness. The older generation is the cause of this climate crisis, and now, are the only people in positions of power who have the ability to save all that can be salvaged. An ‘all of the above’ method for New York’s energy production is equivalent to choosing the wrong answers as well as the right answers. Circling the wrong answer along with the right answer won’t make it correct. Governor Hochul, we need you to choose only the right answers: stop burning fossil fuels and build renewable energy. We deserve a future,” said Catherine Du, Fridays for Future NYC.



Climate Can't Wait is a collaborative of organizations that have joined together to demand that the New York State Legislature and the Governor take urgent and bold action on climate. Please note that not all issues discussed in this Report Card are supported by every organization in Climate Can't Wait. www.climatecantwait.org