



The Climate Reality Project
NEW YORK STATE COALITION



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Climate Organizations Appalled at Last Minute Changes Proposed for Scoping Plan Which Undermine Plan to Achieve Climate Act 2030 Goal

*Climate Action Council Member States Fossil Fuel Industry “Has Been Handed The Pen”
Groups Call on Council to Reject Industry Proposed Delay Tactics and False Solutions*

As the Climate Action Council (CAC) prepares to vote on their Final Scoping Plan during the upcoming December 19th meeting, climate advocacy groups representing tens of thousands of New Yorkers excoriated last minute environmentally detrimental and unsound proposals advanced by fossil fuel industry representatives that threaten to upend the progress made by the CAC in putting together an effective plan to meet the mandates of New York’s landmark 2019 climate law, the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA).

The advocates [sent a letter today to the CAC](#) requesting that the Final Scoping Plan draft be released in advance of the December 19th meeting, to be in line with the Open Meetings Law and allow for meaningful public participation and public accountability.

“At recent meetings, the CAC Co-Chairs DEC Commissioner Seggos and NYSERDA Director Harris, and their staff recommended proposals that would severely undermine what were otherwise strong safeguards against advanced nuclear, hydrogen, and biomethane (called renewable natural gas or RNG by the fossil fuel industry),” said **Anne Rabe, NYPIRG Environmental Policy Director** “These proposed changes were not carefully vetted in the public hearings, or the advisory committees set up to shape the final plan. The CAC must reject these late additions as they undermine the climate goals of the state. If the CAC fails to do that, we call on the Governor to eliminate them from any legislation or regulation her Administration advances to implement the Scoping Plan.”

The CAC announced at its December 5th meeting that a final Scoping Plan will be distributed to the Members of the CAC this week and released to the public after the December 19th meeting.

“The decision to share the Final Scoping Plan before the December 19th meeting only with CAC members violates the state Open Meetings Law, which requires proposed laws and other policy documents subject to a vote

to be distributed to the public at least twenty-four hours before a meeting,” said **Bob Cohen, Esq, Policy and Research Director of Citizen Action of New York**, one of the groups signing letter to the CAC sent today asking that the Plan be made public in advance. “There is no reason why the public and the media should not see the scoping plan on the same day as the members. This basic step would allow the public and advocates to better understand how New York plans to deal with the climate crisis, and allow the Legislature and other decision-makers to determine legislative and agency solutions as soon as possible.”

“Timely building electrification mandates, for instance, had received overwhelming support during the public comments period, and are now delayed. Clearly, when a CAC member remarked during the Dec. 5 meeting that it looked like the [fossil fuel industry had been handed the pen](#) towards the end of the process, it wasn’t an exaggeration,” said **Anshul Gupta of the Climate Reality Project**. “Weeks before the plan’s public release, National Grid was already doing victory laps, even [proclaiming in public meetings](#) that their advocacy was successful in delaying some building electrification mandates in the Final Scoping Plan.”

“Thankfully, the state legislature still has the power to override the fossil fuel industry’s egregious influences in the plan and hope that it will do exactly that. Fossil fuel corporations and big business lobbyists have been spending tens of millions of dollars to block, delay, and water down crucial action to mitigate climate action in New York in order to protect corporate profits,” said **Rob Galbraith, Senior Research Analyst with LittleSis, and co-author of the *Fueling Obstruction report on the fossil fuel industries impact on New York’s climate policy process***. “This investment appears to have paid off yet again as fossil fuel interests on the Climate Action Council and off have succeeded in weakening recommendations for New York to meet its climate commitments. It is imperative that Governor Hochul and the state legislature now stand up to these corporations and their lobbyists and put the health of New York residents and our land, air, and water ahead of corporate profits and implement an expeditious and truly just transition away from the fossil fuel economy.”

“Despite overwhelming evidence that so-called ‘advanced nuclear reactors’ are unproven, too slow to build for meeting our climate needs, and are much more expensive than renewables paired with storage, last minute proposed changes in the plan would put New York’s monetary resources toward this environmentally unjust false solution rather than solutions that are clean, proven, and equitable,” said **Jessica Azulay, Executive Director of Alliance for a Green Economy**. “New Yorkers want a safe, clean, and prosperous energy economy based on renewables, not nukes, gas, or cow manure. The CAC should put evidence and environmental protection ahead of corporate greed in their final plan.”

“In 2019, led by the incredible organizing of the NY Renews coalition, in concert with frontline communities, environmental justice organizations, and allies statewide, the Legislature ratified the most ambitious climate law in the nation. To witness fossil fuel interests on the Climate Action Council (CAC) attempting to atrophy and adulterate the work of the grassroots with false solutions like cap and invest, hydrogen combustion, and nuclear is discouraging,” remarked **Anthony Karefa Rogers-Wright, Director of Environmental Justice with New York Lawyers for the Public Interest and a Steering Committee Member of NY Renews**. “If these rogue agents of the CAC really believe these initiatives would benefit people in lieu of their profits, they would be proposing them in a transparent setting rather than insidiously, behind closed doors. New Yorkers want real climate solutions promulgated by lawmakers who are real climate champions, as demonstrated when the vast majority of us approved the Environmental Bond Act. We have no time to perambulate and we call on the Governor, our lawmakers, and State agencies to reject and dispatch of any tainted elements in the Final Scoping Plan advanced by tainted fossil fuel interests - there’s too much at stake, our lives, our planet and our collective future.”

“The scientific and moral imperative is clear: there must be no new investment in fossil fuel expansion, including production, infrastructure and exploration,” said **Michael Richardson of Rivers & Mountains Green-Faith** “The proposed hydrogen solutions do not accomplish this.”

"It's dangerous and disingenuous to fund and encourage false climate solutions like hydrogen and 'renewable' natural gas," said **Alycia Bacon, Organizer with Mothers Out Front.** "These so-called solutions will further harm communities already affected by a legacy of pollution and racism. Front-line communities and our allies have no interest in creative ways for the same companies who got us into the climate crisis to line the pockets of their shareholders and instead demand meaningful and equitable climate solutions from the Final Scoping Plan. It is disturbing that the fossil fuel industry was able to sneak language pushing false climate solutions into the Draft Scoping in the last 2 weeks of a 2-year process."

"It's clearer than ever that New York must pull out all the stops to move the state off fossil fuels and achieve the ambitious emissions reductions we passed into law through the CLCPA. And yet, we find ourselves fighting false solutions inserted into the climate action plan at the 11th hour, seemingly at the behest of the fossil fuel industry," said **Alex Beauchamp, Northeast Region Director of Food & Water Watch.** "Any plan that embraces hydrogen, renewable natural gas, and other risky schemes that serve little purpose beyond throwing the fossil fuel industry a lifeline is simply unacceptable. It's time for Governor Hochul and the Climate Action Council to recognize the blindingly obvious: we have to stop burning stuff to produce our energy."

"New Yorkers, from climate scientists to public health professionals to the New York City Council, have weighed in with the CAC and Governor Hochul in favor of a robust and just Scoping Plan to implement the Climate Act," said **Allison Considine, Senior Campaign Representative for the Sierra Club.** "To protect our communities from storms, extreme heat, pollution, and climate change's other dangerous consequences, public leaders must take clear and resolved action. This means following the strong recommendations of Advisory Panels and committing to rapid electrification of buildings and transportation, a just transition, and no new fossil fuel power plants. To undermine a considered and transparent process with eleventh-hour concessions to the industries that fueled this crisis would be a blow to New York's proud record of climate leadership."

"The CAC must reject hydrogen and renewable natural gas, two false solutions that would increase, not decrease, greenhouse gas emissions and other dangerous pollutants," said **Jeanne Bergman, Senior Policy Advisor at Sane Energy Project.** "Hydrogen as a replacement fuel for heat and energy in buildings and vehicles is simply not viable. Conventional hydrogen production and its use exceed GHG emissions from coal and gas combustion for the same purposes, and Carbon Capture and Storage technology to mitigate that simply does not currently exist. Replacing existing pipelines and appliances to accommodate the tiniest atom would be wildly expensive and unsafe, benefitting only the utilities that seek to increase capital investments. Exchanging residential fracked gas systems for hydrogen would cost homeowners an estimated \$100,000 over the fifteen year life of heaters and appliances. Both hydrogen and RNG pipelines will leak, and combusting them indoors is polluting and harmful to health. The industry and utilities want residents and policymakers to believe that they can produce a magic gas which will end climate-changing emissions and – this is the point – allow them to continue to make massive gas infrastructure investments that their customers would pay for. The CAC must not collude in pretending that these are reasonable elements of the transition to a just and CLCPA-compliant energy system."

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