

Comments on DRAFT NEW YORK STATE ENERGY PLAN

Susan Van Dolsen Feb. 20, 2014
29 Highland Rd. Rye, NY 10580
Svand58@aol.com 914-525-8886

Just about sixteen months ago, New York City was hit with a storm that devastated much of the region leaving short-term and long-term impacts imprinted on the minds of all of us. Many New Yorkers thought that living through such a tremendous storm would finally spur policymakers to move New York State away from a reliance on fossil fuels, both because of the impact on the climate and because of the acute need to create a more locally distributed power system.

It's very disappointing that the New York State Draft Energy Plan does not provide a solid path away from a reliance on fossil fuels, nor does it provide concrete goals that show a commitment to the future. For example, the Draft Energy Plan doesn't specify how the state will achieve a goal set by Gov. Paterson to reduce emissions 80% by 2050. Though this draft provides some incentives to develop some renewable energy and to create some local distribution systems, these gains are undermined by an increased dependence on methane gas, a fossil fuel.

The draft plan operates on a false premise that methane is clean. Methane emissions from shale gas infrastructure projects are a significant contributor to climate change because methane is 72 times more powerful than CO₂ as a greenhouse gas. The final Plan should require measurement and tracking of all greenhouse gas emissions, including those from the full lifecycle of shale gas development. There should be a specific schedule for the reduction of total greenhouse gas emissions with benchmarks at regular intervals.

There are a multitude of proposed gas infrastructure projects that require permits to be granted by NY State agencies. The New York State Energy Board should be taking a holistic approach when evaluating these projects by looking at long-term economic and health impacts from new and expanded pipelines, compressor stations, gas fired power plants, storage facilities, and liquefied natural gas plants. New York's energy policy should not be predicated on facilitating the gas companies' need to move a glut of gas from the Marcellus Shale region to and through New York and then for export to the global market where the gas commands a higher price. Gas infrastructure imposes health and safety risks to New Yorkers, adds to climate change and ties up investment dollars that could be better used for wind, water and solar projects. The Plan

does not take into account the health and safety impacts and associated costs from all of these projects.

Governor Cuomo and the Draft Energy Plan call for the Indian Point nuclear facility not to be re-licensed. What do they suggest instead? They call for methane fired power plants such as the CPV Valley plant in Middletown that's near the end of its permitting process. The Public Service Commission hearing is being held next Tuesday, February 25th. This polluting plant is not needed and should be rejected. It promotes fracking and is not clean. To support this, you can find a press release on Riverkeeper's website about a study by Synapse, commissioned by the Natural Resources Defense Council that states that Indian Point can be shut down without one cubic foot of new gas. This Plan should NOT include any gas fired power plants and associated infrastructure to replace Indian Point.

One stunning and ironic gas pipeline project is the Williams Transco Rockaway Lateral which is proposed to cross an extremely vulnerable area of the city, exactly where Sandy took aim. Another ill-conceived project is the Port Ambrose Liquified Natural Gas facility proposed off the coast of Long Beach. LNG facilities are terrorist targets and explosive hazards. Governor Cuomo has the power to reject the LNG facility and the Public Service Commission could and should streamline the permitting of a wind farm proposed in the same area.

In contrast to these gas infrastructure projects, Dr. Mark Jacobson and a team of visionary scientists and economists have proposed The Solutions Project which provides a roadmap for New York State to produce 100% of our energy for electricity, transportation and heating and cooling using wind, water and solar, plus efficiency and conservation, by 2050. This plan reduces energy demand by 36.4%. It creates 254,000 jobs that will last for at least 40 years. The plan also predicts 2,500 less air pollution deaths and savings of energy, health and climate costs of \$4,100 per person.

In conclusion, I would like to state that I object to the fact that some components of the Energy Plan were not released in time for these hearings. How is that fair to the public? Are we to really believe that that public's input will be taken seriously? I am here today to say that New Yorkers deserve better. Governor Cuomo can be a leader in the nation by proposing an energy plan that rejects the increased use of climate changing fossil fuels. New York lived through Sandy and we are tough. We can prove to the world that we don't need fracked gas and that we embrace energy policies that promote economic growth powered without fossil fuels. The decision and commitment to succeed must be today, not 10 years from now or 20 years from now. We don't have time to wait.