



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 189

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and Governor to sign, Senate Bill S.6453 and Assembly Bill A.1466C, the “NYS Build Public Renewables Act” enabling the New York Power Authority to own and build new renewable generation, storage, and transmission.

By Council Members Avilés, Louis, Hudson, Brannan, Hanif, Joseph, Nurse, Abreu, Restler, Won, Gutiérrez, Cabán, Schulman, Menin, Marte, Bottcher, Dinowitz, De La Rosa, Sanchez, Narcisse, Velázquez, Farias, Richardson Jordan, Ossé, Williams, Brewer, Krishnan, Gennaro and Riley (in conjunction with the Brooklyn Borough President)

Whereas, In 2021, New York State’s electric grid was comprised of approximately 30% renewable generation resources, with approximately 4% provided by wind, 2.5% solar assets statewide. Environmental advocates have expressed concerns that there are insufficient renewable projects in the pipeline to meet the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act’s (CLCPA) mandated target of 70% renewable energy by 2030, and a zero emission grid by 2040; and

Whereas, In New York City, electricity is largely generated via the combustion of fossil fuels, with approximately 85% of the electric supply sourced from fossil-fuel combustion plants in 2021, compared to upstate, where only 12% is sourced from fossil-fuel combustion plants and 88% of the electricity is supplied via renewable generation; and

Whereas, The combustion of fossil fuels for energy production leads to the emission of airborne pollutants such as sulfur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), particulate matter (PM), carbon dioxide (CO₂), mercury (Hg), among others; and

Whereas, According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, exposure to these pollutants has been linked to a variety of negative health effects, both physical and psychological. Positive correlations have been found between exposure to elevated levels of airborne pollutants and worsened mental health

outcomes, increased rates of certain cancers, higher incidences of asthma, bronchitis, heart disease, emergency room visits, and premature death; and

Whereas, Statistical analysis in California suggests that power plants, are more likely to be sited in economically disadvantaged communities, a trend that holds true when plotting the location of NYC's in-city power plants over maps showing concentrations of persons of self-identified minority status and percentages of communities at or below the federal poverty guideline; and

Whereas, The New York City Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice acknowledges that the City must maximize the use of renewables within the city, and increase transmission from clean power sources outside the city, in order to meet the CLCPA mandated goal of an 100% zero emissions grid by 2040; and

Whereas, The New York Power Authority (NYPA) is the largest public utility in the country, providing approximately 25% of New York's energy, around 80% of which is renewable hydroelectric power, the most affordable source of energy available in the state; and

Whereas, The NYPA is currently barred by its charter from owning more than six generation projects over 25 megawatts, a restriction that would be removed by The Build Public Renewables Act, allowing the NYPA to scale up new large-scale renewable sources faster, cheaper, and, as a public entity accountable to New Yorkers, potentially more democratically than private developers can; and

Whereas, The legislation will enable the NYPA to sell additional low-cost renewable energy directly to all customer classes at wholesale prices, with disadvantaged communities and low-income customers prioritized and automatically enrolled to receive the lowest-cost NYPA power on an opt-out basis; and

Whereas, The advocacy group Public Power NY estimates that the bill would be revenue neutral for the State and could be financed through a combination of NYPA's low-cost bond issuances and progressive electric

rates, helping to ensure that the renewable transition is undertaken as affordably as possible; and

Whereas, According to a study published by environmental advocacy group The Climate + Community Project, the bill has the potential to generate \$48.6-\$93.5 billion in economic activity statewide by 2030, and would help ensure that more of the dollars New Yorkers spend on energy stay within the state by reducing reliance on fossil fuel purchased from out of state, and reducing reliance on corporations for the buildout of renewable resources like offshore wind; and

Whereas, The study also estimates that the bill has the potential to create 28,410 to 51,133 well-paying green jobs, would assist in the just transition for fossil fuel industry workers to the green economy, as all NYPA projects must pay prevailing wages, remain neutral to unionization, and remain subject to project labor agreements; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and Governor to sign, Senate Bill S.6453 and Assembly Bill A1466C, the “NYS Build Public Renewables Act” enabling the New York Power Authority to own and build new renewable generation, storage, and transmission.

NRC
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