



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 710

Resolution calling upon the New York Power Authority to increase planned capacity targets to at least 15 gigawatts of new, publicly-owned renewables by 2030, to redirect funds from its economic incentive awards program toward the buildout of distributed renewable energy generation and storage and energy bill assistance for low income New Yorkers, and to build out 5 gigawatts of renewable generation in the downstate zone.

By Council Members Nurse, Schulman, Brewer and Krishnan

Whereas, Over the past decade, New Yorkers have experienced many of the effects of the climate crisis, including worsening storms, both coastal and pluvial flooding, sea level rise, and heat waves; and

Whereas, The effects of climate change are often inequitably distributed, with communities of color, children, older people, and low income communities, who can lack the financial and community resources to respond to weather-related disasters, more likely to experience the deleterious effects; and

Whereas, According to the International Panel on Climate Change, greenhouse gas emissions must be substantially reduced by mid-century in order to limit the global average increase in temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius, and no more than 2 degrees Celsius, to minimize the worst impacts of climate change; and

Whereas, The IPCC's sixth assessment report, published in 2022, calls for a moratorium on constructing new fossil fuel infrastructure, stating that "without immediate and deep emissions reductions across all sectors, limiting global warming to 1.5°C is beyond reach"; 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, In 2019 the New York State Legislature passed the Climate Leadership and Community

Protection Act (CLCPA), committing New York to a net-zero carbon economy by 2050, 100% zero emission electrical generation by 2040, a 40% reduction from 1990 levels in statewide greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, and 70% renewable energy by 2030, with a commitment that 40% of spending on climate programs be targeted at disadvantaged communities; and

Whereas, In furtherance of statewide renewable generation goals, the 2023-24 New York State budget includes the Build Public Renewables Act (BPRA), which empowers the New York Power Authority (NYPA) to develop, own, and operate renewable power generation assets across the state, and mandates the authority to develop and publish a renewable energy generation plan beginning in 2025, and at least biennially thereafter; and

Whereas, In October of 2024, NYPA released a draft Renewables Strategic Plan for public comment, outlining the state's renewable energy generation goals for the next 2 years, which include 40 potential renewable generation projects totaling 3.5 gigawatts (GW) of generating capacity; and

Whereas, According to the NYPA Draft Strategic Plan, at the time of publication, New York State only has sufficient operating and contracted generation projects to supply 73,292 gigawatt hours (GWh) of the 164,910 GWh projected statewide load in 2030, approximately 44%, compared to the 70% called for by the CLCPA; and

Whereas, The draft strategic plan acknowledges that New York State is behind on meeting CLCPA goals, and states that NYPA expects "attrition," meaning it is likely that fewer projects than are being proposed will be built, further complicating efforts to reach 70% renewable generation by 2030; and

Whereas, Given the extent to which statewide operating and contracted renewable generation capacity fall short of meeting the CLCPA requirement of 70% renewable generation by 2030, NYPA's goal of 3.5 GW of potential new renewable generation outlined in the draft strategic plan is insufficient; and

Whereas, Public Power NY, a coalition of environmental and clean energy advocates and labor unions,

as well as the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations and the Building Trades Council, have called for the buildout of 15 GW by 2030, to ensure that CLCPA targets are met; and

Whereas, According to testimony submitted to NYPA by the advocacy group Green Education and Legal Fund, building out 15 GW of renewable generation would create between 20,000 and 30,000 green union jobs, keep the retirement and conversion of NYPA's highly polluting peaker plants on schedule for 2030, and ensure electricity stays affordable for New Yorkers; and

Whereas, NYPA must plan for at least 5 GW of renewable generation in the lower Hudson Valley and Downstate New York regions, where energy demand is the highest, as siting generation assets close to high demand areas can reduce transmission congestion, and because communities in the area should be able to access the air quality improvements and green job benefits that such projects would provide; and

Whereas there are ample opportunities in downstate New York to partner with public institutions to achieve our renewable energy generation goals; and

Whereas, The BPRA also mandates NYPA work with the New York State Public Service Commission to establish the REACH program, which would use profits from the generation and sale of renewable energy to fund bill credits to low and moderate income New Yorkers in disadvantaged communities; and

Whereas, NYPA economic development operations currently provide significant energy discounts to multinational corporations, which should be redirected to further build out publicly owned renewable energy projects or directed to the REACH program to maximize the number of New Yorkers who can be assisted through the initiative; and

Whereas, Increasing renewable generation targets from 3.5 GW to 15 GW statewide would result in significant regional clean air improvements from decreased reliance on fossil fuel based electricity production, reducing the emission of airborne pollutants such as sulfur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), particulate matter (PM), carbon dioxide (CO₂), and mercury (Hg), among others; and

Whereas, Redirecting subsidies from NYPA's economic development operations towards increasing the

buildout of publicly owned renewable generation, power storage assets, and bill assistance for low and moderate income New Yorkers will reduce the financial burden on communities dealing with some of the highest energy prices in the country, and increase access to good paying green jobs; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York Power Authority to increase planned capacity targets to at least 15 gigawatts of new, publicly-owned renewables by 2030, to redirect funds from its economic incentive awards program toward the buildout of distributed renewable energy generation and storage and energy bill assistance for low income New Yorkers, and build out 5 gigawatts of renewable generation in the downstate zone.

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