



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' -- for the week of July 3, 2023 -- 'The bill for out-of-control legislating isn't free'

THOMAS F. O'MARA July 3, 2023

| ISSUE: **NYS SPENDING AND TAXING**



Senator O'Mara offers his weekly perspective on many of the key challenges and issues facing the Legislature.

We better start paying attention to what it all costs. The latest reports from fiscal experts show that the Albany Democrat spending spree has already left this state facing multi-billion-dollar budget deficits over the next three years.

Senator O'Mara offers his weekly perspective on many of the key challenges and issues facing the Legislature, as well as on legislative actions, local initiatives, state programs and

policies, and more. Stop back every Monday for Senator O'Mara's latest column...

This week, "The bill for out-of-control legislating isn't free"

America celebrates Independence Day this week, yet here in New York the observance comes at a time when this state appears on the way to being less free than ever before.

The latest comes out of New York City, where environmental bureaucrats are looking to crack down on carbon emissions from *coal- and wood-fired pizza ovens!* As they say, you can't even make this stuff up anymore.

It's an extension of the climate madness gripping our entire state government since the enactment of what's known as the "Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act" (CLCPA) in 2019 under then-Governor Andrew Cuomo and pushed ever since, relentlessly, by Governor Hochul and her far-left Democrat allies in the State Legislature.

And being pushed, by the way, without Albany Democrats having any idea, in my opinion, of what these far-reaching energy mandates are going to cost every New Yorker and every local economy throughout this state.

Recently, as noted by the Upstate New York advocacy organization Upstate United, Washington surpassed California as the state with the most expensive gasoline -- with the average cost of a gallon of gas fast approaching \$5 statewide. According to an article in the *Seattle Times*, "Experts say Washington's price surge is linked to the state's latest, most ambitious efforts to battle climate change, specifically the new carbon-pricing program launched this year that charges businesses for the greenhouse gases they emit."

A carbon pricing program, by the way, that's getting underway in New York State.

"(Washington's governor) promised that the Act would have a minimal impact (on gas prices), if any," noted Upstate United. "Where have we heard this before? It's time Albany leaders come clean with consumers. New Yorkers deserve to know the true price tag being hidden from them."

Don't count on price tag transparency coming out of Albany anytime soon.

Remember that back in April, Governor Hochul and her environmental czars finally admitted that the CLCPA, as currently structured, "*is certain to be a major driver of future costs* for New York families (*emphasis mine*)." The plan, they said at that time, will impose extraordinary costs across the board on New Yorkers, including causing home heating costs to increase by 80% and gasoline prices by 62 cents

per gallon!

There was talk -- there was even legislation introduced -- that the Hochul administration wanted to revise a key provision of the original CLCPA, one that would directly reduce the plan's cost of implementation. That talk was quickly silenced, however, after furious pushback from climate activists and other staunch supporters of the current CLCPA -- and we haven't heard a word about it since.

Nonetheless, that doesn't change the stunning fact that the Hochul administration, and some top legislative Democrats, acknowledged that, left as is, the CLCPA could cost everyday New Yorkers and their families far too much on everything, upend lives, and devastate local businesses and economies.

New York State has been a leader in clean energy and reducing emissions. We should continue our advancement. That doesn't mean we should carelessly ignore how much is too much or how far is too far. Our state emissions account for only 0.4% of total global emissions. In other words, even if we get to zero through radical energy mandates, at astronomical expense and devastation to New York's economy, we will have zero impact on global climate.

Shutting down coal- and wood-fired pizza ovens becomes ridiculous, but it's symbolic of the kind of thinking that has taken hold in New York government. Governor Hochul remains all-in. The trouble has been and remains that their plan has never included a straightforward cost-benefit analysis of its feasibility, affordability, or reliability and, up to now, what New Yorkers have been left facing are mountainous costs and dire consequences.

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