



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' -- for the week of September 4, 2023 -- 'A perfect storm of higher costs and dire consequences'

THOMAS F. O'MARA September 5, 2023

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

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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, "**A perfect storm of higher costs and dire consequences**"

The perfect storm out of Albany and spreading throughout this state keeps growing more ominous: A rising tide of migrants from the southern border. An ever-building wave of Medicaid spending. The steady spread of population losses. The darkening clouds of crime and lawlessness.

Disturbingly, it's like Governor Hochul and the rest of the Albany Democrats can't see it coming. Or don't want to. Or simply do not have any idea what to do about it.

Let's not forget the Green New Deal that keeps getting greener (i.e., keeps needing more and more taxpayer dollars) every time we hear about it.

Four years ago, when then-Governor Andrew Cuomo and the Democrat majorities in the Senate and Assembly enacted what's known as the "Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act" (CLCPA), many of us began warning right away that Albany Democrats were ramming ahead, at breakneck speed, with a radical agenda of energy mandates. Governor Hochul has remained all-in on the idea of a zero-emissions economy and society that simply ignores the cost to all New Yorkers.

Keep in mind that all of this is coming fast and furious to New York. Green New Dealers want 70 percent renewable energy by 2030 and zero emissions by 2040 -- despite our state emissions accounting for just 0.4% of total global emissions. And recognizing that, even if we get to zero, at astronomical expense and devastation to New York's economy, we will have zero impact on global climate.

The most recent warnings surfaced last week in filings with the state Public Service Commission (PSC) from many of the wind and solar energy developers that New York is counting on to carry out the projects that the governor and her legislative allies view as fundamental to the success of their so-called strategy.

According to the most recent filings, what's the bottom line from these developers? An article in the *Albany Times Union* summed it up this way: "The over-arching message was that many projects that are planned or under development won't be viable without guarantees of more money." More state taxpayer money and higher costs for energy ratepayers, that is.

The New York State Energy and Research and Development Agency, the state's lead energy agency, states that electricity prices could skyrocket 64 percent to cover the increased costs already being cited by their hand-picked wind and solar developers.

In short, it's a no-win scenario for New York State consumers and taxpayers. It will be an unending downpour of higher and higher costs. Earlier this year, for example, the Port of Albany, which had initially pegged the cost of building a new factory to produce wind towers at \$350 million, had already increased the cost to \$604 million and turned to the state for more aid. It's a scenario that is going to play out over and over again.

Upstate United Executive Director Justin Wilcox responded to last week's PSC filings this way: "The filings make clear that these projects are going to cost far more than what was originally bid. However, what's truly astonishing is that virtually nobody knows exactly how much money it is going to ultimately cost utility customers. Those numbers simply are not being made public and equal opportunity was not provided to all bidders, especially unsuccessful bidders, which sets bad precedent. The bottom line is New York's utility customers, from residential to industrial, are going to see their costs skyrocket as a result. Leaders in Albany need to be transparent about how much the CLCPA is going to cost hard

working New York families. It's time to stop keeping New Yorkers in the dark about escalating energy costs."

New York State has been a leader in clean energy and reducing emissions and we should continue our advancement. The trouble has been that the Albany Democrat plan has never included a straightforward cost-benefit analysis of its feasibility, affordability, or reliability. Left to stand, their plan will keep catching New York State's consumers and taxpayers by surprise, facing a perfect, devastating storm of mountainous costs and dire consequences.

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