



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' -- for the week of July 8, 2024 -- 'NYS signals it might be going too fast on energy mandates'

THOMAS F. O'MARA July 8, 2024

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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, **"NYS signals it might be going too fast on energy mandates"**

You've heard it and read it time and again over the past several years since the enactment of New York's far-reaching climate agenda known as the "Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act" (CLCPA): Governor Hochul and her energy czars are moving too far, too fast to impose sweeping clean energy mandates on every state citizen.

Since the CLCPA's approval in 2019, we've watched Albany Democrats move at world record speed to pile one unaffordable mandate on top of another unworkable mandate on top of the next unrealistic mandate desperately trying to inflict a zero-emissions economy on this entire state -- and altogether these actions will come with a devastating price tag and consequences for ratepayers and taxpayers, businesses and industries, school districts, farmers, local economies, and more.

Keep in mind that some of the mandates are already in the state's mandate pipeline and on the way to hit all New Yorkers extremely hard in the very near future, including:

--No natural gas within newly constructed buildings, beginning in 2025;

--No new gas service to existing buildings, beginning in 2030;

--An all-electric school bus mandate starting in 2027;

--No replacement natural gas appliances for home heating, cooking, water heating, clothes drying beginning in 2035; and

--No gasoline-automobile sales by 2035.

The important reality that has been consistently overlooked (or ignored) by supporters is that Albany Democrats have been desperately trying to achieve 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 could somehow get to zero through the imposition of these drastic, draconian measures imposing untold hardships on New York's communities, residents, industries, and local economies, it will have virtually zero impact on the statewide, national, or global climate.

One recent report, in fact, warned that the costs to New Yorkers could well prove to be over \$1 trillion by 2050 -- and that's in a state already recognized as one of the nation's least affordable places to live, one of America's highest taxed and regulated states, and the state that is losing

population faster than any other in the country.

Let's always keep in mind that New York State already consumes less total energy per capita than all but two other states. New York State's per capita energy consumption for the transportation sector is the lowest in the nation. In 2020, New York State's per capita energy-related carbon dioxide emissions were lower than those of any other state; but then the Albany Democrats closed the Indian Point nuclear energy plant and CO2 emissions have increased over 40% in the New York City area since the closure.

In short, we're already a national leader in this arena of public policy, as we should continue to be. Nevertheless, from the outset of the CLCPA's implementation, I and many others have repeatedly warned that this climate agenda would only produce a perfect storm of unaffordability, unfeasibility, and unreliability. That has become clearer and clearer by the day.

Now, the governor and her energy czars finally appear ready to start seeing the light too. A report released last week from the Hochul administration admits that New York will miss its goal of 70 percent renewable energy by 2030 and is considering pushing the date to 2033.

While even a new goalpost of 2033 remains far too ambitious, in my view, the apparent reassessment and reexamination at least opens a long-overdue and desperately needed public discussion on the realities of the current strategy. It's a strategy that, as it stands, is not realistic or achievable. It is not responsible or rational. It lacks critical foresight, and it unreasonably risks energy grid reliability and affordability.

The chair of the state's Public Service Commission acknowledged last week to Politico, "It will be a challenge to achieve the 2030 goal as things currently lay."

According to Politico's reporting, "The review released Monday (July 1) of the state's progress, required under the climate law, paints a stark picture of the challenges facing policymakers in achieving the legislative mandate. It includes recommendations by the Department of Public Service and NYSERDA, which will be considered by the Public Service Commission. It will be available for public comment for 60 days before it is finalized and the Public Service Commission considers actions."

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