



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

Press Release: Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins And Democratic Senators Urge Against Federal Actions That Will Hike Utility Costs For Hudson Valley Consumers

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS May 1, 2014

| ISSUE: **CONSUMER PROTECTION**

Albany, NY - Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and members of the Senate Democratic Conference yesterday sent a letter to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) urging a reversal of the decision to create a new energy capacity zone for the Lower Hudson River Valley which will cause a dramatic increase in rates for consumers.

“Residents of the Hudson Valley already pay among the highest rates in the country for their electricity and other utilities,” Senate Democratic Conference Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said. “The creation of this new capacity zone will cause these already exorbitant costs to skyrocket in the region at a time when consumers statewide are still reeling from the sudden increases in energy costs associated with a particularly harsh winter.”

The New York Independent System Operators proposed creating the new capacity zone in the power grid running from Albany to New York City for the purpose of attracting additional local power generation. However, as New York State’s Public Services Commission Chair, Audrey Zibelman stated, the new capacity zone “does not provide any value to consumers.” In fact, the new zone is expected to increase costs to consumers by as much as 12% or higher.

In the letter sent by Senate Democratic Leader Stewart-Cousins and signed by Democratic Senators whose constituents would be impacted by the FERC actions, the Senators noted that Governor Cuomo's administration is already working to transfer energy from upstate New York to the downstate area to eliminate the need for this new capacity zone and prevent this significant additional burden on consumers. The Senators also noted that the dramatically higher energy rates will place undo burdens on families and business owners and stifle economic growth throughout the greater Hudson Valley.

The letter sent by Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and members of the Senate Democratic Conference to the [Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is available here.](#)