



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

Senate Republicans Urge Public to Reject Albany's Plan to Hike Energy Costs

ROBERT G. ORTT March 2, 2022

| ISSUE: **HIGH ENERGY COSTS, INFLATION, CLIMATE ACTION COUNCIL**



ALBANY, NY – The New York State Senate Republican Conference today called on all New Yorkers to get involved and submit official public comment on the [Climate Action Council’s \(CAC\) draft Scoping Plan](#) and radical efforts to eliminate reliable, affordable sources of energy. Natural gas hookups and services, as well as those from propane and heating oil, are vital for New Yorkers – especially in rural communities and during harsh winters – and cutting off these dependable sources of energy would be costly to residents and businesses and ineffective on a global scale.

“This Energy Affordability Crisis, fueled by the failed policies of One-Party Rule, is unaffordable, unforgiving, and unsustainable. The former administration and now Governor Hochul’s administration are trying to rid the state of critical energy infrastructure sources such as natural gas hookups, which will only

worsen the problem. This will be ultimately unaffordable for every day, common-sense New Yorkers, leaving them in the dark and in the cold. That's why it is essential that we make our voices heard and call out these unrealistic 'climate' plans, which will only further burden our communities," **said Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt.**

"New York State is traveling at breakneck speed to radically remake New York's energy future. It will be enormously expensive for state and local taxpayers, not to mention residential and business utility ratepayers. It holds far-reaching consequences for the state and local economies. People are going to be shocked when they're hit in the pocketbook. We need a fuller discussion of what these actions potentially mean in the important context of feasibility, affordability, and reliability. At a cost of hundreds of billions of dollars to New Yorkers and untold costs to the economy, we are barreling full speed ahead to further crush the affordability of living for families, drive up the cost of doing business, and destroy economic opportunity," **said Senator Tom O'Mara, Ranking Member of the Senate Finance Committee.**

"As a labor leader, I know firsthand how policies crafted in Albany impact the hardworking men and women of our state. This plan will eliminate jobs our residents need and impact every New Yorker as they recover from the COVID-19 crisis. New York State needs to commit to working with our workers and labor organizations to find solutions that protect these workers and our state's families while safeguarding the environment, since these goals are not mutually exclusive. Our workers are the lifeblood of our economy and we need to protect them and all of our residents," **said Senator Mario R. Mattera.**

"The New York state budget proposal, a must-pass piece of legislation that keeps the Empire State's government operating through the next fiscal year, is no place for a non-germane amendment that bans fossil fuels, and is yet again an attempt to force these policies under the radar and with little regard to what the ultimate aim of these policies will cost consumers. This is a proposal that needs to be debated on its own and in a transparent manner that ensures all New Yorkers have an opportunity to truly understand the implications of limiting their access to natural gas utilities," **said Mark Valentini, Plumbing-Heating Cooling Contractors—National Association.**

"New York State's pursuit of a zero-carbon future is a worthy goal, but the overall strategy and legislative mandates taken so far need a reality check. Over the past several years, the path taken has been fraught with severe risks to working New Yorkers and consumers, particularly the poor and elderly, who will continue to see escalating utility bills and less reliability. Legislation that's been approved, and other bills pending, are creating a dangerous energy supply gap, causing prices to soar, and costing the state thousands of middle-class jobs," **said John J. Murphy, International Representative of the United Association of Journeymen & Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry of the United States and Canada.**

"New Yorkers for Affordable Energy is a not-for-profit organization that supports greater access to clean, reliable and affordable sources of energy for residential and business consumers. It is abundantly clear to our members that many New Yorkers aren't aware of the State's energy proposals aimed at eliminating access to natural gas. If New York outlaws gas equipment, many New Yorkers will soon get an unbearable financial shock. Replacing a gas furnace or water heater will no longer be affordable, leaving residents with a \$30,000 price tag to revamp their entire home energy system. This comes in the wake of already-skyrocketing energy costs, which are directly related to the state's efforts to limit use of natural gas. There must be a pragmatic, economic justice component to the State's plan to address climate change

for the overall wellbeing of New York residents,” **said Michelle Hook, Executive Director, New Yorkers for Affordable Energy.**

“Now it is critical that New Yorkers across the state comment on the Draft Scoping Plan so that climate policy recommendations can be made that are fair and balanced. The recent world events demonstrate that New York’s energy resources must be abundant, clean, and affordable into the future. New Yorkers have the chance for their voices to be heard about how these policy recommendations will impact our daily lives,” **said Gavin Donohue, President & CEO, IPPNY.**

“The fact is, New York’s climate goals can be reached with a balanced approach that uses a mix of energy sources without banning reliable and affordable natural gas and abandoning the natural gas system altogether, as advocated by many of the Plan’s proponents. By using an ‘all of the above’ approach – that is, renewables, efficient use of the natural gas delivery system for low and no-carbon fuels, and other technologies – we can meet the state’s emissions targets without causing the disruptions in reliability and resiliency that current studies show would occur if we cutover to electric power alone,” **said Donna L. DeCarolis, President of National Fuel Gas Distribution Corporation.**

The CAC has released a [blueprint to alter the state’s energy plans](#), which includes:

- No new gas service to existing buildings, beginning in 2024;
- No natural gas within newly constructed buildings, beginning in 2024;
- No new natural gas appliances for home heating, cooking, water heating, clothes drying beginning in 2030;
- No gasoline-automobile sales by 2035;
- Installing onsite solar or joining a community renewables program by 2040; and
- Installing geothermal heating by 2040.

New Yorkers have through April 30, 2022 to submit formal public comments on the proposed energy plan. Senate Republicans today encouraged hard-working residents and business owners to make their voices heard on these disastrous policies. New Yorkers can use this link to submit public comments: <https://climate.ny.gov/Our-Climate-Act/Draft-Scoping-Plan>.

In the meantime, New Yorkers continues to face **extreme short- and long-term economic challenges**, including:

- **Inflation** – a [7.5 percent spike in consumer prices](#) over last year, the highest since 1982 – including skyrocketing costs for transportation, food, and other essential goods and services;

- **Pain at the Pumps** – average gas prices in the state have gone up by more than a dollar-per-gallon, or an estimated [39 percent increase](#) from a year ago;
- **Rising Home Heating Costs** – monthly average home heating oil prices have also risen by more than a dollar per gallon from a year ago, or an estimated [39 percent increase](#) from a year ago;
- **Soaring Electric Bills** – electric bills and rates have also gone through-the-roof across the state, with the price of electricity rising about [26% on Long Island](#) from a year ago, an expected [46% increase this winter in the Hudson Valley](#), and some New York State Electric & Gas ratepayers have reported bills [spiking 121% higher than the month before](#), for example. These skyrocketing increases in costs come from the rising cost of fuels internationally and follow the recent shutdown of the Indian Point Power Plant, which provided up to 25% of New York City’s electricity;
- **Declining Consumer Sentiment** – since 2018, New Yorkers have become [less optimistic](#) about overall and future economic conditions, with recent concerns spiking over food and gas prices;
- **Overall Tax Burden** – [New York has the highest tax burden in the nation](#) at 14.1 percent – without factoring in a plethora of other burdensome fees; and
- **Economic Freedom** – [New York has ranked last in the nation](#) in terms of “economic and overall freedom” for years.

“The path to recovery for New York’s struggling families and small businesses is beset on all sides by soaring energy costs and One Party Rule’s failed policies, stifling red tape and suffocating bureaucracy. New York’s government should be doing everything it can to provide relief for our families NOW, not clinging to the impractical, out-of-touch policies and dogma of far-left activists and political donors. My colleagues and I remain committed to fighting for the needs and survival of everyday New Yorkers, the interest group that continues to be ignored by Albany’s so-called leaders,” **said Senator Fred Akshar.**

“Our state’s Democratic leadership has an unrivaled track record of proposing ‘solutions’ that are often far worse than the problem. The radical proposals in the Climate Action Council’s draft Scoping Plan are a prime example. They would have a devastating impact on our economy, businesses and residents and add one more item to the growing list of reasons for leaving New York. People don’t need more financial hardships; they need relief, which is what our plan would provide,” **said Senator George Borrello.**

“The plan put forth by the Climate Action Council calls for dramatic changes in how New Yorkers will heat their homes in the future, but is short on specifics. Eliminating the use of natural gas, propane, heating oil and wood will substantially increase the state’s demand for electricity and prove costly for consumers and businesses. I encourage residents, community leaders and others to voice their concern by submitting their comments on the proposed energy plan before the April 30 deadline,” **said Senator Patrick M. Gallivan.**

“While it is important that we seek ways to protect our environment and conserve natural resources universally and not unilaterally, the Climate Action Council’s Draft Scoping Plan is an unsustainable and unaffordable proposal that will further burden residents, families, businesses and communities and force even more people to flee the state. I will continue to advocate for, propose and support legislation and initiatives that will stop the exodus, and I urge New Yorkers to submit public comments on this unrealistic plan that I fear will have detrimental effect and impact on our state for years to come,” **said Senator Joseph Griffo.**

“Protecting our environment is a goal we all share. But we must be responsible for how we reach these goals to protect taxpayers and business owners who are already overburdened by higher costs. We must be especially mindful of the impact of these policies on our rural communities and residents who rely on natural gas, heating oil, and propane. I encourage my constituents to review the Climate Action Council’s draft scoping plan and make their voices heard on the issues that are important to them,” **said Senator Pam Helming.**

“While I strongly support the use and expansion of renewable green energy, many families across upstate New York currently rely on propane, heating oil, and natural gas to heat their homes during the bitter winter cold. Families need these reliable fuels to supply the gaps that exist with new, green energies. We cannot deny families access to traditional and plentiful fuel options. Albany’s push to eliminate New Yorkers’ access to critical energy sources at the very time families are being squeezed by inflation, rising home heating costs, soaring electric bills, and gas prices 39 percent higher than a year ago, is a bad idea. These proposals pose unrealistic economic challenges and raise serious questions as to who will pay for the new, required heating systems and appliances. Families would shoulder these higher costs while facing fewer energy choices. Neither outcome is acceptable,” **said Senator Daphne Jordan.**

“Legislation and policies that would drastically raise taxes on gas and home heating fuel are non-starters in my book. New York already has the highest energy costs in the nation and measures adding to consumer pain make no sense. I stand with residents and small business owners who are hurting because of the long-standing Albany practice of simply raising taxes to pay for ill-conceived schemes. It is time we band together to get our message out – enough is enough,” **said Senator Peter Oberacker.**

“Rejecting the increase in energy taxes is critical. Residents are already facing an extreme affordability crisis. Inflation, rising gas prices, and an increase in grocery prices are putting a huge strain on New Yorkers. Now is not the time to add more financial burdens to hard-working New Yorkers. We should be focusing on diversifying our energy supply, this is the most cost-efficient and reliable plan for New Yorkers,” **said Senator Ed Rath.**

“New Yorkers are fleeing our state in droves because day after day, it is becoming more costly to live here. The region I represent knows firsthand how cold winters can get—and how high heating costs can be. I encourage people across our state to join my colleagues and I in voicing their concerns about these proposals, which will only cause further financial pain to New Yorkers,” **said Senator Patty Ritchie.**

“While we can all agree that we need to take significant steps to preserve our environment and protect our natural resources, we cannot move forward with drastic measures that will substantially increase costs on hardworking New Yorkers who are already struggling to make ends meet. Some of the policies being proposed will only push struggling New Yorkers to the brink and send them fleeing for more affordable

states. With many New Yorkers still reeling from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have to strike a better balance—bolstering and incentivizing investments in the green economy while still holding the line on costs to ensure taxpayers are not left with an even greater burden to bear,” **said Senator Sue Serino.**

“The cost of home heating and gas for our cars continues to skyrocket and the Senate Democrats’ ‘green initiatives’ will only make this crisis worse. Between record inflation and a global energy crisis, we need to do more to help New Yorkers get through this cold, expensive winter. It’s time to shelf these unrealistic, unaffordable strategies and instead provide the sorely needed relief on gas and energy taxes that our residents deserve,” **said Senator Dan Stec.**

"With gas prices and home heating bills soaring to their highest level in years, we need to be increasing domestic energy production and suspending gas and energy taxes to protect our national security and ease the pain at the pump. The last thing New York State should be doing is implementing yet another pie in the sky plan that will only add to more pain at the pump and higher heating bills for overburdened New Yorkers,” **said Senator Jim Tedisco.**

“Soaring Inflation. Sky-High Energy Prices. Severe Pain at the Pump. Not to mention that the state has a pre-existing affordability crisis. All of these are reasons why we are witnessing a record exodus of our fellow New Yorkers. We must reverse course – and we can do this together. I strongly urge the public to make their voices heard on this radical Albany plan which will only hike the energy costs on New York families and businesses,” **said Senator Alexis Weik.**

As the global energy crisis rages on, Senate Republicans have a multi-pronged approach geared toward providing relief, especially to low and middle income class New York families. Senate Republicans have proposed solutions to help mitigate the unaffordable costs being placed on New Yorkers in the [Take Back New York](#)” 2022 agenda.

To cut energy costs and tame the energy affordability crisis, Senate Republicans are proposing:

- **Mitigating the Impact of the Global Energy Crisis** by providing nearly *\$300 million in energy tax relief* by eliminating the two-percent gross receipts tax and removing the underlying 18-A Assessment on utility bills;
- **Suspending the State’s Gas Tax** to provide instant economic relief for hard-working, commuting New Yorkers – which [Senate Republicans called for months ago](#);
- **Rejecting the Democrats’ Proposed Carbon Tax** that would raise prices at the pump by *55 cents per-gallon* and on home heating bills by *more than 25 percent*; and
- **No New Tax or Fee Increases** in this year’s New York State Budget.

“New Yorkers should be able to commute to work every day without dealing with severe pain at the pump. New Yorkers should be able to pay their home heating and electric bills without breaking the bank. Our plan is to give residents and businesses the tools they need to get involved, and provide energy tax relief to ensure the people of our state have personal financial freedom during this volatile economy,” **concluded Leader Ort.**

###