

# Guest Column from



***for the week of February 3, 2025***

**“NY’s energy plan still loaded with unanswered questions”**

Public hearings on Governor Hochul’s proposed 2025-26 state budget were off to a quick start last week, especially on Day 2 when the Legislature’s fiscal committees focused on one of the fundamental debates facing New York: energy.

For many of us, New Yorkers deserve forthright and transparent answers to the key questions underlying what will be, if the state’s current [REDACTED] majority leaders continue to pursue this agenda, arguably the single most costly public policy ever approved. Consequently, we keep trying to zero in on answers to these key questions.

Since the approval of the “Community Leadership and Climate Protection Act” (CLCPA) in 2019 – the first year that Albany [REDACTED] majorities gained one-party control of all levers of state government – they haven’t stopped moving at world record speed to impose a zero-emissions way of life and economy on this entire state. Remember that New York State is already a leader on this front, accounting for just 0.4% of global emissions, and we can rightfully be proud of what we have accomplished. Yet the current actions being pursued will come with a devastating price tag and consequences for ratepayers and taxpayers, businesses and industries, school districts, farmers, and entire local economies.

Among the key questions that we’ve been asking are: If New York State continues to pursue, on our own and under the current strategy and timeline, a zero-emissions way of life and economy, will it ever have any impact whatsoever to buttress against a globally generated climate challenge? In other words, is it worth the risks and consequences to the state’s entire economy for New York State to keep pushing so far, so fast when whatever we do has (or could ever have) only a minimal, at best, impact on the global climate?

Once again, following testimony from several of the Hochul administration’s energy czars responsible for developing and implementing what’s recognized as one of the most far-reaching and radical energy plans underway, anywhere, we’re simply left with all the unanswered questions and concerns we started with.

We heard testimony from the heads of the state Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), state Public Service Commission (PSC), state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), and the New York Power Authority, among other stakeholders from both the public and private sectors.

What we heard, in my view, continued to reinforce a widespread belief, on both sides of the aisle, that there has been and remains a glaring lack of a detailed and transparent cost-benefit analysis of the state’s plan, raising concerns over skyrocketing utility costs for

ratepayers and other growing fears that New York's current climate agenda and strategy of imposing a barrel full of new energy mandates on all New Yorkers isn't realistic or remotely workable under its current timeline.

On top of everything else already in the pipeline, as part of her record-breaking, \$252-billion proposed state budget, the governor is seeking the largest-ever direct appropriation of at least \$1 billion to support yet-to-specified climate actions. Despite all the outstanding questions, she just keeps aimlessly pouring billions of taxpayer dollars into the cause in ways that clearly run the risk of skyrocketing utility bills for New York's ratepayers.

I stated at the hearing, "These massive rate increases are not affordable for ratepayers. And we haven't even touched the tip of the iceberg. When the public knows, you're going to hear about it. Everything's being done with smoke and mirrors on this whole thing. There's no transparency, there's no forthrightness with the public on what this is going to cost them."

Concerns were raised on numerous specific mandates, such as the ongoing implementation of the Advanced Clean Truck (ACT) rule requiring zero-emissions heavy duty trucks and other vehicles in New York State, which many of us have warned will have a devastating economic impact on the trucking industry and local economies. Another mandate requiring school districts to transition to all-electric school buses could very well turn out to be the costliest mandate ever imposed on schools and local property taxpayers.

Many of us have warned from the outset that the failure of Governor Hochul and legislative [REDACTED] majorities to put forth a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of the costs of implementing these mandates under their currently prescribed timeline doomed the entire effort to failure. We have questioned the affordability, feasibility, and reliability of the strategy for ratepayers and taxpayers, manufacturers and small businesses, and local economies.

That's where it stands on the most critical public policy action underway in New York State. Unanswered questions that New Yorkers deserve to have answered.

The only thing clear from the engineers of this train wreck is that they don't want you to know what it's going to cost. If you did, and when we ultimately do know, there will be a statewide revolt against the Albany [REDACTED] majorities.

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