



## Nuclear New York

Independent Advocates  
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## New York Energy and Climate Advocates

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### COALITION OF CLIMATE HAWKS AND UNION LEADERS CALL FOR NUCLEAR POWER IN NEW YORK

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**Albany, NY** – As New York’s Climate Action Council conducts public hearings on how to meet the goals of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA), **climate scientist and former director of NASA’s Goddard Institute Dr. James E. Hansen**, labor representatives, community leaders, and engineers called for a bold and inclusive climate strategy, embracing both renewables and zero-carbon nuclear.

Hansen’s 1988 historic testimony before Congress on the impacts of global warming is widely recognized as the catalyst for the modern climate movement. But in the decades since, many governments have fallen short.

“The urgency of the crisis demands that all viable forms of carbon-free energy be on the table,” said Hansen. “Without a growing role for nuclear power, New York and the world have little chance of meeting their climate goals.”

The Draft Scoping Plan calls for hundreds of square miles of solar panels across New York, thousands of giant offshore and onshore wind turbines, massive battery plants, and sprawling transmission. Yet, to prevent blackouts from the intermittency of renewables and storage limitations, the plan relies on a large and completely theoretical fleet of highly flexible carbon-free technologies that do not exist yet.

“The proposed plan is neither realistic, nor green,” said **Keith Schue of New York Energy & Climate Advocates**. “A course correction is needed for the CLCPA to succeed.”

Wind and solar help with decarbonization. However, as renewables become a greater share of our energy mix, intermittency impedes further decarbonization despite escalating ratepayer and taxpayer costs.<sup>1</sup> California and Germany have demonstrated how this results in skyrocketing electric bills, grid instability, and continued reliance on fossil fuels.<sup>2</sup>

Further, New York’s demand for electricity will increase. Recognizing this reality, the speakers called for a rational, informed energy strategy that includes the protection of New York’s upstate nuclear plants and planning for the next generation of reactors.

“Electric vehicles and heat pumps require more electricity. So does a growing economy,” said **Dietmar Detering of Nuclear New York**. “Nuclear power can provide the reliable, abundant energy our state needs to prosper while slashing emissions.”

According to the U.N. Economic Commission for Europe, nuclear power has the lowest lifecycle GHG emissions of any energy source. It is also among the least impactful with respect to mining, materials, and toxicity.<sup>3</sup> “The extremely small ecological footprint of nuclear energy allows New York to conserve farmland and protect nature,” said **Dennis Higgins, a technology professor and sustainable farmer**. Thanks to nuclear and hydro, upstate New York already has a world-leading 90% carbon-free electric grid.

Nuclear generation also offers the highest pay and the largest percentage of union jobs of all U.S. energy

industries.<sup>4</sup> Labor leaders emphasized the incredible value that New York’s existing nuclear plants—FitzPatrick, Ginna, and Nine Mile Point—bring to communities.

“Our upstate nuclear plants provide high-paying, quality jobs to generations of families and tax revenue for the communities that host them,” said **Mike Bradshaw, business representative for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 97**. “That is something we are proud of and want to see grow.”

**John J. Murphy, of the Clean Energy Jobs Coalition and International Representative for the United Association of Journeymen & Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry** emphasizes, “If New York has any hope of achieving its clean energy goals in this decade and beyond, we need to maintain reliability while pursuing technologies like zero-carbon nuclear much more aggressively.”

“We have a long history of direct engagement with the folks at our nuclear facilities over the past 50 years or so,” said **James Oldenburg, Supervisor, Town of Scriba**, host to Nine Mile Point and FitzPatrick. “We are blessed to have them as a major taxpayer and employer of our area which benefits the county and school districts as well.”

Throughout the nation and the world, support for nuclear power is on the rise.<sup>5</sup> This year, after extensive study, the European Commission recognized nuclear as environmentally sustainable, a designation intended to promote capital investment. France, which previously decarbonized its grid with nuclear, recently announced plans for a new generation of reactors. The U.K, Netherlands, and Canada have committed to expanding nuclear energy as well. India and China are already building their next generation of reactors.

In the U.S., several states have taken action to protect their existing nuclear plants. Meanwhile, innovative companies like NuScale and TerraPower are designing low-cost modular reactors that incorporate thermal storage—a good match for renewables.<sup>6</sup>

“We oppose taking zero-carbon nuclear power offline,” said **James Slevin, President of the Utility Workers Union of America**. “Looking to the future, we urge a balanced approach to meet our carbon reduction commitments while delivering affordable electricity, bolstering infrastructure, improving grid reliability, and creating New York jobs that support families and communities.”

Describing enthusiasm in Washington, **Isuru Seneviratne, director of Radiant Value Management** observed, “Leaders on both sides of the aisle are realizing that if we really want to tackle climate change and remain relevant as advanced technologies develop around the world, then it’s time for the United States to reinvest in nuclear. Nuclear energy is *Made-in-America*.”

“With its spirit of innovation, New York belongs at the forefront of this work, not on the sidelines”, concluded Dr. Hansen. “As New York plans for the future, we urge the Climate Action Council, Governor Hochul, and state agencies to set outdated ideologies aside, bring experts to the table who understand the value of nuclear power, and embrace a strategy that puts the state on a winning path to achieving its energy, jobs, and climate goals.”

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<sup>1</sup> Denholm, et al. *The Challenges of Achieving a 100% Renewable Electric System in the United States*, National Renewable Energy Laboratory Joule 5, 1331-1352, June 2021 <https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S2542435121001513>

<sup>2</sup> Aklın, *Do High Electricity Bills Undermine Public Support for Renewables? Evidence from the European Union*. <https://ideas.repec.org/a/eee/enepol/v156y2021ics0301421521002706.html>

<sup>3</sup> *Life Cycle Assessment of Electricity Generation Options*, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 2021. <https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/LCA-2.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Energy, US Energy & Employment Jobs Report. <https://www.energy.gov/us-energy-employment-jobs-report-useer>

<sup>5</sup> *Energy Attitudes: Americans Support Clean Energy*, ecoAmerica, American Climate Perspectives, Volume V, 2021. [https://ecoamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/acps-2021\\_energy-attitudes-report.pdf](https://ecoamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/acps-2021_energy-attitudes-report.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> NuScale small modular reactor <https://nuscale.com>; TerraPower Natrium reactor <https://natriumpower.com>