State Energy Planning Board
Public Comment Hearing

LOCATION: Albany Public Library
TIME: 10:30 a.m.
DATE: February 27, 2020

HELD BEFORE:

Alicia Barton, Chair, NYSERDA
John Rhodes, NYS Public Service Commission
Jared Snyder, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
Kevin Hansen, Empire State Development
CHAIR BARTON: Good morning, everyone. My name is Alicia Barton. I am the president and CEO of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, or NYSERDA, and here today as the Chair of the New York State Energy Planning Board.

I would like to start by introducing the other representatives of the planning board who are joining me for today's public comment hearing. Immediately to my left, Public Service Commission Chair, John Rhodes. To my right, Jared Snyder from the Department of Environmental Conservation, representing Basil Seggos. And last, but not least, thank you, Kevin Hansen, for being here from Empire State Development, representing Acting Commissioner and President and CEO-designate Eric Gertler.

While we don't have all of our planning board members here today, all of our members are invested in this process.

We are here today at the Albany Public Library, and I want to thank them for hosting us, and ask our guests, I also ask the participants at
today's meeting, to maintain decorum and abide by
the rules of the public library.

This is a hearing to accept public
comments on the Draft Amendment to the 2015 State
Energy Plan. The Draft Amendment was noticed in
the State Register on January 8, 2020. Notice of
today's hearing was published on January 29, 2020.

The purpose of the Planning Board's
consideration of amending the State Energy Plan
rests with the landmark development of the
enactment of the Climate Leadership and Community
Protection Act signed into law by the Governor
this past summer.

New York's Climate Act is among the most
ambitious climate policies adopted by any economy,
requiring no less than 85 percent reduction
economy-wide in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.
Its enactment cements New York's clean energy and
climate leadership.

Central to the Climate Act are a number of
clean energy goals, further advancing the goals
that the Energy Plan previously set out, and will
set in motion significant changes in New York's
electric generation mix, among other things.

The Amendment under consideration would adopt and synchronize the new clean energy goals established by the climate act, and ensure that they are integrated into the existing energy plan.

The Amendment under consideration would also adopt direction for the Public Service Commission to consider a mechanism that would establish a stable funding source of funding for the Electric Generation Facility Cessation Mitigation Fund, which is designed to assist communities that have hosted fossil fuel generation in their transition to clean energy.

All comments provided here today will be considered by the Energy Planning Board as it evaluates whether to adopt the Draft Amendment. Written comments are being accepted through March 8th. Additional details may be found on the Energy Plan website, which is energyplan.ny.gov.

For today's hearing, I'll start by calling the names of those individuals who have indicated they wanted to speak when signing in. When your name is called, please come to the podium to
provide your statement.

A court reporter is here today to provide a transcript of everything that is said. It is important that we record the comments for the consideration by the planning board.

As this is a public statement hearing the Planning Board is not entertaining questions, but may ask clarifying questions of presenters.

Again, if there is anyone who is in attendance that wishes to speak, please let us know by signing up or otherwise indicating.

So, with that, I think I'll go to the first speaker, who is Laurie Wheelock from the Public Utility Law Project.

MS. WHEELOCK: Good morning, everyone. My name is Laurie Wheelock and I'm here today on behalf of the New York State Public Utility Law Project. We go by the acronym PULP.

PULP is a 40-year-old statewide nonprofit that works to educate, litigate and advocate on behalf of New York State's low and moderate income customers, particularly in the utility world.

We thank the Department of Environmental
Conservation, NYSERDA, the Public Service Commission and the Empire State Development office for being here today, and for the opportunity to testify here on whether the Draft Amendment to the 2015 State Energy Plan should be approved.

PULP has reviewed the amendment that was issued on December 18, 2019 and published in the State Register on January 8, 2020. The amendment would create a surcharge of up to 2 percent on all customer energy bills throughout New York State, for the purpose of funding an offset to the loss of tax revenues and Payments in Lieu of Taxes, or PILOTs, and loss of many skilled jobs that would be caused by the closure of Indian Point nuclear facility located in Buchanan, New York along the Hudson River.

PULP appreciates and endorses the State's vital efforts in creating a consensus to the decommission of Indian Point nuclear facility.

PULP also understands the need to mitigate potentially severe effects from the closure of Indian Point and other members of its baseload electric generation fleet, particularly the coal and dirty peaker plants, including, but not limited to, the effects on
local taxes and the workforce itself.

PULP also sees the decommission of Indian Point as a powerful opportunity for the community to work with the state to create new economic opportunities and workforce retraining programs and opportunities, not only in Westchester, but potentially around other likely upcoming plant closures. And we look forward to attending more Indian Point Closure Task Force meetings, as Richard Berkley, our Executive Director, did on Thursday, January 30, 2020.

For the amendment itself, PULP only cautions about the potential bill impacts that would be created by the proposed 2 percent charge and how the bill impacts will affect low and moderate income customers across the state.

We respectfully request that a cost-benefit analysis be performed in multiple counties throughout the state just to determine how that 2 percent charge will affect New York's most needy utility customers.

New York State's utility customers have been receiving increases in multiple company territories over the last few years.

We want to take a moment to specifically thank
Governor Cuomo and the Department of Public Service, because each of the utility companies has been implementing low income programs, with the goal of lowering energy burden for low income households in our state to 6 percent to help those most vulnerable households afford their utility bills.

Although more work needs to be done, each step of the way there must be caution regarding financial effects to New York's utility customers and particularly those fixed income seniors, the disabled, and low income households generally.

PULP looks forward to participating in the proceedings and working with the state to continue to smooth the process of Indian Point decommissioning to protect well-paying jobs, the tax revenues to fully fund our schools, and to continue to move to the cleaner energy future while lessening the environmental challenges ahead.

Thank you all for having us here today.

CHAIR BARTON: Thank you.

The next speaker will be Ross Gold from the Workforce Development Institute.

MR. GOLD: Good morning, everyone. Thanks
for being here today. Appreciate you all for holding
the public comment for us this morning and the work that
you are doing to advance our State Energy Plan process.

My name is Ross Gold. I'm the Director of
Climate and Energy Program for Workforce Development
Institute. WDI is a New York State based non-for-profit
that works to grow and keep good jobs here in New York
State.

We do that through demand driven, but
flexible demand drive programming. We use a range of
tools which is our ground level intelligence, which is
our regional directors, found in ten regions throughout
New York State. We meet with businesses, labor
organizations, community college.

As our partners in government, I want to
thank NYSERDA, the Public Service Commission, Empire
State Development and DEC for being partners in some of
the work we're doing on workforce.

And we also have funding to facilitate
projects, workforce training projects, training workers
on solar, electric vehicles, and the like.

WDI also tracks data entry policy and works
with government and others on best practices for
implementing things such as State Energy Plan and things of the like.

With that, I would just like to couch a couple of statements about your energy planning process and the amendment.

I don't have any comments on the specifics of the amendment, the final language you choose. I just want to give some ideas of some things, best practices or points to consider when having your plan. We're going to follow up with some written, short written comments as well.

First of all, I want to talk about how climate change is a great disrupter for workforce. When you're seeing things as the impacts of climate change being heat waves, if you have outdoor workers who are out there in heat waves who are impacted negatively, people have to just get off of work to get out of heat stress and related issues.

So, the impacts of climate change, in and of itself, impacts the workforce. So does the policies that we're going to implement in order to stop climate change. That also has the power to be a great disrupter. It doesn't have to be. It also presents
great opportunities.

So, when you're drafting such as this State Energy Plan, a climate action plan, things of that nature, you should consider the workforce impacts of those policy statements. That would be one of the best practices.

Similar to what you would do with an environmental impact statement, but doing one on the workforce and taking a look to see what that policy means to the workforce.

And another thing you should be taking more a look at it is just transition and incorporating the just transition principles into your process, which you are, and that's great. They're certain principles that should be included in a workforce. Social dialogue, such as the one we are having this morning, is a very important part of just transition.

So, thank you again for having these conversations and adding these comments. It is an important part of the just transition that you're envisioning within some of the changes you're making.

I also want to address the collective cessation mitigation plan. It is important to be
putting money into revenues for off PILOTs and PILOT payment when we close a plant, but it's really important that we have funding for workforce training and for the workforce when we have these plans.

You should look more broadly than just a community's impact and also see the workforce impact and make sure there's funding for training and benefits and unemployment payments while out of work.

Is the coverage we have now, in short term unemployment, long enough for what we need in order to institute good training and education programs to transition someone from working in a gas plant to getting them to work for solar industry or to work somewhere else. You just need more leeway and more time, so keep that in mind as a best practice for you to go forward.

We're going to submit additional comments, but we wanted to thank you for being here this morning. Thank you for having this important dialogue, which is needed on these issues.

Thank you.

CHAIR BARTON: Thank you for your comments.

The next speaker will be Conor Bambrick from
Environmental Advocates of New York.

MR. BAMBRICK: Good morning. My name is Conor Bambrick, Environmental Advocates of New York. Thank you for being here this morning. Thank you for your dedication to the process. We really appreciate it. We also really appreciate the effort to incorporate the provisions of the new climate law into the State Energy Plan, especially the provision that requires at least 35 percent of clean energy funds impacted to the benefit of the disadvantaged community.

The previous speaker spoke about one aspect of just transition, but there's another aspect of that, to make sure that those communities are properly prepared to have the resources they need to transition to a clean energy economy and the opportunities to take advantage of the new jobs that are going to come about.

We feel that this amendment is going to provide clear direction to agencies and authorities that it can move ahead with initiatives that are wholly consistent with the new landmark climate law, instead of having to wait for the development of the plan.

With that, thank you very much.

CHAIR BARTON: Any other individuals wish to
speak?

(No response.)

In order to allow for additional members of the public to arrive, we'll take a couple minute break.

Thank you.

(Recess taken.)

CHAIR BARTON: For the record, I want to note that we held the hearing open for one hour, but did not receive any additional requests to present comments here in person.

I will note for the record that it is still possible to submit written comments from any member of the public by the deadline of March 8th through the State Energy Planning Board website, energyplan.ny.gov.

I will also note that we will hold another public statement hearing this coming Monday at 3 p.m. in New York City at the Building Energy Exchange. Of course, that information is also on the Energy Plan website.

So, with that, and hearing no other interest in providing comments, thank you, everyone, for your time today.

(Public hearing concluded at 11:33 a.m.)
CERTIFICATION

I, Jeanne O'Connell, Registered Professional Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State of New York, do hereby certify that the foregoing to be a true and accurate transcription of the stenographic notes as taken by me of the aforesaid proceedings.

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Date Jeanne O'Connell