

HealthyPlanet, Inc.

These comments on the Draft Scope of the 2009 New York State Energy Plan are offered on behalf of HealthyPlanet. First, I will say that we are very pleased with the comprehensive nature of the draft and particularly to the attention paid to climate change and the health impacts of energy production. I would recommend a modification to the proposed "Issue Brief on the Health Impacts of Energy Use". In addition to "examining the potential impacts of energy production on public health and strategies for reducing potential impacts", there needs to be an attempt at placing a dollar cost on these impacts so that the true relative cost of clean and renewable sources of energy such as solar and wind, might be accurately compared to the cost of traditional fossil fuel power generation. Cost-benefit analysis of renewable projects, without substantial attempts at quantifying the dollar cost to society of pollution-caused or aggravated conditions from the toxic constituents released from the burning of fossil fuels, are flawed and incomplete. These health effects range from birth defects to asthma, emphysema, cancer and more. We are all exposed to and impacted by these toxins, however, a greater burden is borne by fetuses, children, the elderly, the immune compromised and those living in areas with a disproportionately high rates of pollution. In addition, NYS efforts at reducing greenhouse gasses, protecting public health, reducing energy demand and energy conservation would be greatly enhanced by an ongoing public education campaign. This outreach could focus on both the role that each resident of NYS can play in greatly reducing their carbon footprint, as well as the potential, related monetary savings associated with taking such actions. Coordinating such public education efforts with the many willing environmental and health organizations, would increase the potential of reaching a greater number of residents, thus increasing the efficacy of funds spent in this area.