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Comment:

We are encouraged by the fact that climate change and the need to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions are featured prominently in the Plan, and included as the second of five policy objectives. We also strongly support Governor Paterson Executive Order No. 24 that sets a State goal to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in New York 80 percent below 1990 levels by the year 2050, as well as the establishment of a Climate Action Council that is charged with preparing a draft Climate Action Plan by September 30th of next year in order to identify strategies for meeting the "80 by 50" goal. We also appreciate the fact that the State Energy Plan recognizes the need to site utility-scale renewable energy projects closer to load centers such as Long Island and New York City and we applaud the Plan for encouraging LIPA and NYPA to pursue a large-scale offshore wind park in the Atlantic Ocean. While the Draft Plan contains vital policy objectives, strategies, and recommendations, the Plan's success will ultimately be measured not by how worthy its goals and recommendations were but by how much of it was actually implemented. To this end we suggest that the Plan should be strengthened by defining and committing to much needed support mechanisms - in the form of both financial and regulatory/permitting support - for existing programs such as the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) and the Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard (EEPS). More detailed comments attached.

Renewable Energy Long Island
Comments on Draft 2009 NYS Energy Plan

Renewable Energy Long Island (RELI) is a membership-supported, not-for-profit organization promoting clean, sustainable energy use and generation for Long Island. RELI seeks public participation in energy policy decisions to encourage energy efficiency, use of renewable energy sources, and to protect our environment, economy, and public health.

These comments are based on and expand upon our oral testimony delivered at the public hearing held at SUNY Farmingdale on September 9, 2009.

We commend Governor Paterson, the members of the Energy Planning Board and staff, as well as the Energy Coordinating Working Group, for their vision and excellent work in compiling the 2009 Draft New York State Energy Plan and we strongly support its policy objectives as well as most of its strategies and recommendations.

We are particularly encouraged by the fact that climate change and the need to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions are featured prominently in the Plan, and included as the second of five policy objectives.

We also strongly support Governor Paterson Executive Order No. 24 that sets a State goal to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in New York 80 percent below 1990 levels by the year 2050, as well as the establishment of a Climate Action Council that is charged with preparing a draft Climate Action Plan by September 30th of next year in order to identify strategies for meeting the “80 by 50” goal.

In our recent comments on the Long Island Power Authority’s Draft Energy Plan we emphasized the need to establish an “80 by 50” GHG reduction goal for Long Island, as well as appropriate interim goals and implementation strategies and we are encouraged to see that such goals are part of the State’s Energy Plan.

We also appreciate the fact that the State Energy Plan recognizes the need to site utility-scale renewable energy projects closer to load centers such as Long Island and New York City and we applaud the Plan for encouraging LIPA and NYPA to pursue a large-scale offshore wind park in the Atlantic Ocean.

We submit the following comments for consideration for the final Energy Plan.

1. Need to Ensure Implementation

While the Draft Plan contains vital policy objectives, strategies, and recommendations, the Plan’s success will ultimately be measured not by how worthy its goals and recommendations were but by how much of it was actually implemented. To this end we suggest that the Plan should be strengthened by

defining and committing to much needed support mechanisms – in the form of both financial and regulatory/permitting support - for *existing* programs such as the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) and the Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard (EEPS).

2. Need for Legislative and Agency Support

To ensure full implementation of the Plan's objectives, strategies and recommendations it is important to seek the fullest legislative support as well as support from the State's relevant regulatory agencies and State Authorities.

3. Leading by Example

State government must lead by example through full compliance with various energy-related Executive Orders and other initiatives aimed at making government operations more energy efficient and less carbon intensive.

State government should lead the way in complying with the recently issued Executive Order No. 24 for reducing carbon emissions significantly by 2050. Leading by example will help the State meet its clean energy goals and will help drive the market for clean energy goods and services. Therefore, the state should:

The State should implement aggressive energy efficiency and renewable energy measures to reduce the carbon footprint of its own operations and at least fulfill Executive Orders 111; but should strengthen its commitment and go beyond existing requirements. The state should implement all cost-effective efficiency measures and then meet its remaining energy needs through the installation of on-site renewable energy or the purchase of renewable energy.

To ensure full transparency and accountability in the process, the State should document compliance on these Orders and initiatives on an annual basis.

4. Funding the Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard

Reducing the State's electric energy consumption 15 percent by 2015 is a laudable and important goal and will allow us to tap into one of the most cost-effective tools to lower energy costs for consumers while cutting carbon emissions.

Implementation of the Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard (EEPS) has been very slow and should be accelerated. Full funding commitments are needed now to ensure that the 15 x 15 goals can and will be met.

5. Renewable Energy Deployment

Significant progress with the deployment of renewable energy technologies has been made in recent years but in order to ensure the continuation of such gains continued funding and the coordination of inter-agency permitting for the RPS program is needed. Without such vital support, the State's clean energy goals will not be attainable.

The customer-sited tier program for solar installations in New York has gone through difficult boom and bust cycles and a lack of main tier funding has resulted in companies focusing their development efforts elsewhere. The State needs to ensure that its planning commitment to the RPS program will be matched by sufficient funds. In addition, agency coordination and support for the permits necessary for project development is crucial.

6. Creating a Road Map for Solar

New York can and should be a leader in deploying solar energy technologies. To do so, the State needs to create a long-term strategy, or road map, designed to achieve 4,000 MW of solar electric and thermal capacity. What is needed is a plan with predictable levels of solar incentives for both photovoltaic as well as solar hot water and space heating technologies. Solar thermal technologies should also be included in the eligible technologies under the state's Renewable Portfolio Standard.

7. Need to Fix Net Metering

As the Draft Plan correctly points out, the recently expanded net metering law which now includes commercial customers is not working as intended and a legislative fix is necessary. The Executive Branch and the Energy Planning Board should continue to push for legislation to ensure commercial class customers can net meter on-site renewable energy systems sized to meet their annual energy use up to a capacity of 2 MW rather than be limited by their current peak demand.

8. Need for Adequate Transmission Investments

New York has an aging transmission infrastructure which was not designed to support the full development potential of the State's domestic and renewable energy resources. The State Energy Plan should provide strong support for increased investment in transmission infrastructure with assurances that capital costs will be shared among beneficiaries and are recoverable through the rate base.

9. An Opportunity to Update and Strengthen NYS Building Codes

Buildings and building materials are single largest contributor to global warming and responsible for a significant amount of overall U.S. energy consumption. Nationwide, buildings and the construction materials used in them consume 48 percent U.S. energy. Building operations (HVAC, hot water, etc.) account for 43% of total annual US GHG emissions¹.

The State Energy Plan should seek to strengthen the New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code and the Energy Conservation Construction Code. Strengthening building codes is a very cost-effective way to reduce wasteful fossil energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions for decades to come. Updated codes should be designed to apply to both new construction as well as major renovations.

¹ See i.e. Marilyn Brown, Frank Southworth, Therese Stovall, "Towards a Climate-Friendly Built Environment," Oak Ridge National Laboratory, June 2005. See also http://architecture2030.org/current_situation/building_sector.html

Renewable Energy Long Island commends the Energy Planning Board and all agencies that contributed in the drafting of the Draft State Energy Plan for the hard work that went into this document. It is our hope that the final Plan can be strengthened by the inclusion of more concrete implementation plans and mechanisms as well as recommendations made by us and other stakeholders in this important process.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide our input and look forward to seeing the final State Energy Plan.

Respectfully submitted,



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October 16, 2009