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Defending the East's Greatest Wilderness

May 15, 2009

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Thomas Congdon
Executive Director
Energy Coordinating Working Group
c/o NYSERDA
17 Columbia Circle
Albany, NY 12203-6399

RE: 2009 New York State Energy Plan Interim Report comments

Dear Mr. Congdon:

Once again, the Adirondack Council appreciates the opportunity to offer comments on the 2009 New York State Energy Plan as it evolves through the process towards a final product. The Adirondack Council is a not-for-profit, membership based organization dedicated to ensuring the ecological integrity and wild character of the Adirondack Park. The Adirondack Council was created in 1975 and does not accept and any public funding.

We appreciate the efforts of the New York State Energy Planning Board and Energy Coordinating Working Group to offer a "snapshot" of the work that has been done so far with the Interim Report and what we can expect to see in the draft report when it is issued on July 15.

We have a few general comments on the Interim Report as presented. First, as is noted at least three times in the report, the draft is expected to be released on July 15, followed by at least six public hearings, with a final plan published on October 15, 2009. While these dates have been moved back from the original schedule, we believe they remain far too aggressive for the work that remains ahead. We do not believe that it will be adequate for the public to participate in hearings, craft thoughtful and factual comments, have the comments received and considered and have the comments incorporated into the final plan, all within 90

The mission of the ADIRONDACK COUNCIL is to ensure the ecological integrity and wild character of the ADIRONDACK PARK.

days. We suggest that either a) some or all of the supporting documents such as the Issues Briefs be released prior to July 15, so that there is additional time to review them and/or b) the date for release of the final report be moved back to at least December 15. This is especially important in light of the fact that the Interim Report does not offer a whole lot of new material that can be considered by interested stakeholders. While the Interim Report does provide useful background information and a few glimpses of what might be in the draft report, the preliminary findings simply conclude by stating that more details will be in the Draft Energy Plan and specifically in the Issues Briefs.

The Adirondack Council also has a number of specific concerns with the Interim Report. In the Executive Summary, after the challenges are listed, there is a statement that, “New York chooses to meet these challenges through the development and build-out of its clean energy industries.” Build-out is undefined in this context and could be interpreted in a number of different ways. Does it mean building of all facilities that have been proposed? Does it mean solar panels on every roof and a hydroelectric dam on every river? Such ambiguous blanket statements are dangerous and must be clarified.

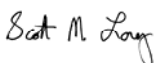
Also in the Executive Summary, funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 is discussed. The report mentions the deployment of stimulus dollars for programs including energy efficiency and weatherization assistance. We hope these types of programs are given as much or more weight in the draft plan as building new systems as the state moves towards the Governor’s “45 by 15” goal.

We are pleased that the Interim Report indicates that New York wants to maintain and strengthen its role as a national leader for the environment, particularly on clean air issues. The State has been a champion in the effort to reduce sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, the precursors to acid rain, as well as carbon dioxide, the most prevalent greenhouse gas.

However, we are concerned about the fact that Governor Paterson, according to published reports in media outlets including the *New York Times*, has agreed to reopen the RGGI regulation and give away more allowances to certain power producers with long-term contracts. This action, which we oppose, may have a direct impact on the Energy Plan. Even though it does not increase allowable emissions in New York as part of the RGGI cap, it provides a financial incentive for older, dirtier power plants to continue their business as usual approach to energy production. In addition, if New York were to give away an additional five million RGGI allowances annually instead of putting them up for auction, this could reduce the amount of funding for NYSERDA’s research and development of clean energy and efficiency programs by roughly \$20 million a year. We hope this potential to decrease the benefits of the RGGI program, as well as embracing the traditional power producing scheme is addressed in the plan.

We look forward to continuing to work with you on these issues and receiving the Draft Energy Plan in July.

Sincerely,



Scott M. Lorey
Legislative Director