



Policy Proposal: Develop Clean Energy

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New York’s per-unit cost of electricity is more than 50% higher than the national average. Meanwhile climate change is decimating our communities – heatwaves kill hundreds every year, while floods destroy our homes and send our insurance premiums skyrocketing. New clean energy would decrease costs and increase quality of life, particularly for minority and low-income communities.

My energy bills feel “out of control.”

You’re not alone. In a recent poll, 68% of New Yorkers described energy prices with exactly those words.

In New York, the per-kilowatt-hour (kWH) cost of electricity – think of that as one “unit” of electricity – is 27.4 cents, more than 50% higher than the national average of 17.25 cents. Our electricity rates are the sixth highest in the entire country.

Where do New Yorkers actually get their electricity from?

Outlets in the wall.

Very funny.

Thanks.

Let me introduce the New York Independent System Operator (NYISO), which is the market and grid operator for the entire state. It both ensures reliable transmission and manages the wholesale electricity market, which sets the supply charges you see on your bills.

In 2025, a little less than 50% of energy generation in NYSISO came from gas; hydropower and nuclear were another 40%, with solar and wind accounting for only 9% of the state’s energy. If that last number seems low – and a little depressing – it gets worse: our state’s total clean energy generation made up a smaller share of total energy produced in 2025 than it did in 2020 (as a result of Indian Point closing in 2021).

What's causing our prices to suddenly increase so substantially?

There are a few issues working in tandem.

Some are macroeconomic in nature and hard to control; for example, with >50% of our installed generation capacity being natural gas-fired plants, as natural gas prices go up, so do wholesale electricity prices. Along the same lines, equipment costs have gone up significantly since the pandemic, increasing delivery costs.

But we also don't generate nearly enough electricity – as a matter of fact, we've had a net reduction in capacity, even as we've had electric vehicles, data centers, and the like creating new sorts of demand.

How does clean energy fit into the picture?

Bringing renewable energy projects online – including the 25GW of renewable energy currently seeking interconnection in NY – helps us reduce our dependence on high-cost fossil fuels. Renewable energy is on average 53% less expensive than the lowest-price fossil fuel alternative. At a time when US electricity demand is expected to increase 25% by 2030, we need to be investing in renewable generation.

Building new clean energy also creates high-quality union jobs, ensures the US retains global geopolitical stature vis-à-vis China, and moves us toward long-term energy independence.

The federal government can and should be overhauling its permitting processes to enable quicker clean energy building – today reviews can take a decade or more and litigation slows projects by an average of four years.

Over half – 57% - of all Americans agree we should be prioritizing expanding wind and solar production over increasing fossil fuel generation, with 65% agreeing we should encourage production of wind and solar power.

Unfortunately, President Trump has waged war on clean energy. His “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” is expected to increase NY energy costs by 20% by 2035. His interference with offshore wind farms along the East Coast has significantly slowed – or halted – key



projects, like Empire Wind (powering ~500k NY homes) and Sunrise Wind (powering ~600k NY homes).

Looking at the President's 2027 budget, we find:

“The President’s budget request would systematically defund the agencies, offices, and university programs responsible for climate observation, modeling, and research across the federal government.

The FY27 proposal once again tries to eliminate the only sources of funding to support families struggling with energy affordability.

From an environmental protection standpoint, the most glaring single number in this budget is President Trump’s proposal to cut EPA’s budget by \$4.6 billion — a 52% reduction that would bring the agency to its smallest budget since the Reagan administration.

For the second year in a row, the Trump administration is requesting to cancel almost all remaining unobligated IJA [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act] funding across the Department of Energy (\$15.2 billion in total). What’s striking about these cuts is how indiscriminate they seem to be, including cuts to programs that align with this administration’s stated priorities (including critical minerals, geothermal energy, and hydropower).”¹

Is Congress doing anything about this?

It is!

The Energy Bills Relief Act – supported by over 120 Democrats – would provide energy bill assistance to millions of Americans, ensure the cost of powering large energy consumers, like data centers, isn’t borne by households and small businesses, restore tax credits for clean energy and cleaner vehicles, expand community solar, speed up the process of connecting clean energy projects to the grid, and more.

¹ <https://fas.org/publication/fy27-budget-request-climate-energy/>



Tackling climate change is important for all of us, while failing to do so falls hardest on some of our most vulnerable communities. Heat mortality rates in NYC are twice as high for Black New Yorkers as for white residents. Low-income neighborhoods can be up to 20 degrees warmer than affluent ones due to less tree canopy and more impervious surfaces. Investing in clean energy is not just the right thing to do, it's the fair thing to do.

What else could the federal government do to expedite clean energy development?

First, it could stop subsidizing fossil fuels. Fossil fuel direct subsidies are an estimated \$29.4 billion annually – that is the equivalent of the utility bills of 17.2 million Americans. The federal government also makes it much more difficult to produce renewable energy than fossil fuels on federal land – only 4% of operating renewable energy occurs on federal land, whereas the equivalent figure for natural gas is 11%, for oil is 12%, and for coal production is 40%.

Second, it could proactively pursue renewable energy incentivization. Tax credits for solar panels, grants and subsidies for research and development, loan guarantees for clean energy projects, renewable energy mandates, and net metering policies (allowing consumers to sell excess energy back to the grid) all fall into this category. The Inflation Reduction Act, signed into law in August 2022, included items like a 30% tax credit for residential solar panel installations and production and investment tax credits for wind, solar, and battery storage projects.

In Europe, feed-in tariffs are used to push renewable energy growth – essentially guaranteeing above-market prices for electricity generated from renewable sources. Germany used this tactic via the Renewable Energy Sources Act and now has renewables accounting for more than half of the country's electricity mix. China has used large subsidies and mandates to become the world leader in producing solar panels, wind turbines, and electric vehicles. We should study how other countries have helped de-risk clean energy investments, which tend to have higher upfront costs than fossil fuel projects but ultimately produce some of the cheapest forms of new electricity generation.

The arguments in favor of building renewable energy have been clear for a long time. And yet, Rep. Clarke has been featured in a pro-climate publication under the headline: "Why is this liberal congresswoman spreading anti-solar arguments?" (The



next line: “Rep. Yvette Clarke (D-N.Y.) signed her name to a letter written by utility lobbyists who are trying to hamper solar power.”).

I’ll work tirelessly in Congress to invest in new renewable energy that creates quality jobs, reduces electricity bills, and protects the environment for generations to come.

Sources include:

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