



My name is Jeanne Bergman. I am an activist with Sane Energy Project in New York City working on climate justice and energy policy. Sane Energy is a small but mighty Brooklyn-based grassroots organization that over the last decade has been a central force in the movement against fossil fuel infrastructure in New York and regionally. The Build Public Renewables Act is one of Sane Energy's top priorities, and I was among those arrested in civil disobedience last year to amplify the urgent need for public power. We support the bill because a sane response to the climate catastrophe raging around us must be fast, and it must be just. The BPRA will enable a rapid increase in the generation and transmission of clean, renewable, affordable energy, and it will prioritize delivering the benefits to low-income and disadvantaged communities and create good union jobs for workers. It is this combination of features that has generated so much popular support for the bill.

I will focus today on why NYPA, if properly led, is the best available vehicle for expanding renewable power in New York. NYPA is a massive state agency, the largest public power entity in the US, with almost \$3 billion in annual operating revenues. NYPA currently generates a quarter of New York State's electricity, and transmits and distributes a third of the total electricity. Though almost a century old, NYPA is an innovative agency that has put the transition to a carbon-free economy at the heart of its mission. However, "carbon-free" is insufficient—the goal must be to eliminate not just carbon dioxide but all climate changing emissions, including methane from any source. The BPRA will help achieve that by defining which renewable sources may be used for electricity generation by NYPA, and stipulating that NYPA will phase out all its non-renewable generation by the end of 2030.

Public ownership is essential to a just energy system. The development of privately-owned power plants depends on market conditions, the cost of capital, politically vulnerable tax breaks and incentives, and other unpredictable factors. Even if every proposed renewable project now in the NYSERDA pipeline were built, which as

many have noted, is unlikely at best, we would fall short of the 70% by 2030 target in the CLCPA. NYPA will be able to build renewable generation at the low cost we need, filling in the gaps left by investor-driven projects. The Authority's excellent bond rating ensures that the capital will be available.

We disagree with those who claim that NYPA's relative freedom from the vagaries of the market is an unfair competitive advantage. What they mean is that private companies need to extract more money from customers than is needed for operations in order to pay handsome profits to investors—the antithesis of a strategy for energy affordability. . NYPA, a non-profit entity, doesn't have that burden. NYPA revenues in excess of operational costs are reinvested and, after passage of the BPR, can be used to discount electricity for low- and middle-income households at 50% the NYISO wholesale price. Moreover, NYPA does not now, and likely never will, have the workforce to design and build all of the necessary projects. The Power Authority will instead contract out construction to private companies, including many of those now represented by industry groups that are actively opposing the BPR. It is worth noting that MWBE and service-disabled veteran businesses will particularly benefit from contracts managed by NYPA. The new renewables projects will be vetted through rigorous planning, design, and procurement processes. NYPA is and will continue to be accountable to the state and federal regulatory agencies and reliability requirements within which its activities are nested, among them FERC, NERC, the PSC, NYSRC, NPCC, and NYISO, as well as to its Board of Trustees, which the bill will increase in number and diversity to ensure transparency and accountability.

NYPA is unique in that it is both a generator and transmitter of energy, and has stated that a key strategic objective is to become the leading transmission provider in New York State. The synergies between power generation and transmission are formidable. In private hands, that's problematic, but not if an accountable government agency is managing it. The two functions were separated in 1978 by PURPA, the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act, in response to the oil crisis and US reliance on imported fossil fuels for energy; Russia's war on Ukraine underscores the economic risks inherent in

international fossil fuel markets. Renewable energy generated on American land and coastal waters is free from those concerns. Increasing NYPA's renewable generation capacity as it expands its transmission infrastructure is the key to the rapid construction of reliable, affordable, renewable energy in New York.

Finally, justice must be at the center of our efforts to meet the CLCPA mandates and slow the warming of the climate, and it is at the center of the BPRA. The legislation prioritizes disadvantaged communities, public housing, and public schools for the benefits of public power, which include low-cost electricity, comfortable and reliable heat pump heating and cooling, training and union apprenticeships, mold and lead remediation, and efficiency programs. It was written in consultation with labor— Pat Guidice of the IBEW said earlier today that it has “the best labor language he’s ever seen” in a piece of legislation—requiring all work projects, including contractors and subcontractors, to utilize project labor agreements and prioritize training for workers who have lost jobs in the fossil fuel industry.

Managing a tremendous, innovative, infrastructural transition for the benefit of the people is exactly what governments can do best. We need an energy moonshot, a WW II-level mobilization to end our reliance on fossil fuels and slow the burning of the planet. The federal government can't do that now, but New York can, and must, lead.

Jeanne Bergman, PhD  
Sane Energy Project  
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