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Climate Action Council Update

**By Anne Reynolds**

The November 30th Climate Action Council meeting focused on the jobs study and a discussion of the draft Scoping Plan. Co-Chair Basil Seggos started the meeting by stating that the time has come for the CAC members to give clear direction to the staff team on finalizing the draft plan. He also announced that Haley Viccaro is the new Strategic Director for Communications for climate issues, including the Scoping Plan and CAC work. Co-Chair Harris mentioned that NYS was well represented in Glasgow for COP 26 and also announced that NYSEERDA had filed the petition to the PSC to finalize the two Clean Energy Standard Tier 4 contracts – the two transmission projects to move clean energy into New York City.

Carl Mas and a consultant presented the jobs study, which examined the number of jobs created and jobs lost in 2030 and 2050 with implementation of the climate plan – including the two options in the draft scoping plan (“scenarios 2 and 3”). The bottom line? Although some jobs are lost – over half of them at gas stations – there is a net increase in jobs in 2030 (+211K) and 2050 (+346K). The jobs study examined 16 sub-sectors involved in energy supply and 11 sub-sectors on the energy demand side, so there is a fair amount of granularity in the results. There is still some follow up analysis to be completed: a workforce analysis and an assessment of impacts on disadvantaged communities. Note that the jobs study is expressly required in NY’s Climate Act.

Conversation then turned to the feedback that the state team has gotten from the CAC on the draft plan. It was divided into non-controversial feedback, such as clarifications and suggestions about topics to mention, and conflicting feedback, such as the role of green hydrogen, recommendations about decommissioning the gas system, and the need for more information on cost impacts. In these more controversial areas, the state team generally suggested either clarifying language, presentation of options, or further discussion of the CAC in 2022.

While the Council tried to reach consensus on these suggestions, they ran out of time and may plan a continuation of this discussion.

The plan going-forward is for the next draft of the Scoping Plan to be provided to Council members by December 10 and a vote to release the draft for public comment throughout 2022 to take place at the December Council meeting.