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[Summaries of the Climate Action Council, Advisory Panel and Working Group Meetings - April 30 - May 14, 2021](#)

## **Land Use and Local Government Advisory Panel – Wednesday, May 12, 2021**

*By: Anastasia Gordon*

The **Land Use and Local Government Panel** reconvened for the last time to make discuss and make amendments to [draft adaptation and resilience strategies](#). Among the suggestions made by Panel members included utilizing the latest climate projections, encouraging community-based planning, reducing pollution, and assessing the state of disrepair of dams. NYSDEC's Mark Lowery noted the adaptation and resilience subgroup agreed to remove and defer a recommendation on maintaining the reliability of the energy system to the Power Generation Panel. The Panel will also present these recommendations at the CAC's next meeting on June 8. Meeting notes and presentations from this and all other meetings of the Land Use and Local Governmental Panel, visit [here](#).

## **Climate Action Council – Monday, May 10, 2021**

*By: Jeff Jones and Anastasia Gordon*

At the Climate Action Council (CAC) on May 10, the last four advisory panels of the Climate Action Council (CAC) reported out on their final [recommendations](#). These panels included the [Transportation, Land Use and Local Government, Energy Efficiency and Housing](#), and [Power Generation](#). They proposed bold, sweeping policy proposals ranging from 100% electric vehicle sales to a moratorium on new/re-powered fossil fuel plants. These proposals will be considered by the CAC for inclusion in the draft scoping plan to achieve NY's climate law, the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA).

CAC co-chair President Doreen Harris (NYSERDA) started the meeting with state updates of programs and grants that were launched during Earth Week. Commissioner Basil Seggos (NYSDEC) then outlined the [timeline and progress of the implementation of the CAC](#). This meeting marked a critical milestone in the CAC process, with the last group of advisory panels presenting greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction recommendations for their respective sectors.

## Transportation Panel

First up to present was the Transportation Panel. The Panel's principal mitigation strategies included adopting regulations like a clean fuel standard (CFS) to achieve the transition to light-duty and medium- and heavy-duty EVs by 2035 and 2045, respectively, enhancing public transportation, implementing smart growth land policies that align with transportation oriented development, and pursuing market-based strategies like the [Transportation and Climate Initiative](#) (TCI) program Initiative to reduce emissions, raise revenue, and assist in the transition to zero-emissions vehicles. These recommendations will reduce emissions by 16% and 77% below 1990 levels, though Panel chair Commissioner Dominguez (NYSDOT) noted they fell short based on E'3 [decarbonization analysis](#).

There were conflicting views with regards to the TCI and CFS. CAC members, Raya Salter (NY Renews) and Peter Iwanowicz (Environmental Advocates NY) emphasized that these cap-and-trade measures are not aligned with the CLCPA and do not realize pollution reduction benefits in specific areas, particularly frontline communities. Instead, the advocates proposed the economy-wide carbon-pricing approach, [Climate and Community Investment Act](#) (CCIA). On the other hand, ACE NY's Anne Reynolds expressed support for TCI as means to providing a dedicated source of revenue for the Panel's transportation solutions. She also pointed out that the CFS, TCI, and CCIA would not produce emissions reductions in specific areas but rather regulations would be needed to achieve that.

## Land Use and Local Government Panel

The Land Use and Local Government Advisory Panel report followed. Mitigation strategies revolved around 5 themes. These included promoting efficient land use and smart growth principles that reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT), maximizing natural carbon sequestration potential, facilitating responsible siting and adoption of clean energy sources, providing local governments with needed tools and resources, and a commitment to environmental justice, disadvantaged communities, and a just transition.

Developing the themes, the report emphasized state facilitation and support for regional planning, including through multi-municipal collaboration. This should include regional scale land-use planning and designation of priority development and priority conservation areas. Transit-oriented development, especially around key rail and bus hubs should be accelerated. And state funding should be aligned to prioritize smart growth, including by expanding existing programs such as Brownfield Opportunity Areas and the Brownfield Cleanup Program. The report calls for special attention to developing community initiatives that promote adoption of clean energy products, services, and job opportunities.

The report concludes by calling for the expansion of tools and resources to help local governments achieve CLCPA goals, including the creation of a centralized portal that offers resources and information to assist communities in navigating, accessing, and integrating relevant climate-oriented strategies. The prospect of a dashboard to leverage local community climate action aligned with the CLCPA was met with great enthusiasm by CAC members.

### Energy Efficiency and Housing Panel

Mitigation strategies for the Energy Efficiency and Housing Panel comprised of adopting codes and standards to improve energy efficiency and regulations to phase out fossil fuel use in buildings and establishing a benchmarking and disclosure program. The Panel also made the bold recommendations to advance a managed and just transition from the reliance on hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) refrigerants and natural gas. Chair RuthAnne Visnauskas (New York State Homes and Community Renewal) noted that these recommendations could result in emissions reductions of 28% and 85% from 1990 levels by 2030 and 2050, respectively.

A major concern raised by Paul Shepson (Stony Brook University) was the shortfall in the emissions reductions by 2030. Janet Joseph noted that constraints exist especially with the need to build up the workforce to replace fossil fuel equipment, phasing out of HFCs, which is a global commodity issue, and the difficulty in retrofitting existing buildings. Panel members also held differing views with regards to the role use of alternative fuels like hydrogen and renewable natural gas as well as expressed concern over the potential costs to consumers from these strategies, among other things.

### Power Generation Panel

The Power Generation Panel's recommendations centered around accelerating deployment of large-scale renewables, distributed energy, and energy storage resources, demand response, and supporting clean energy siting, community benefits, and public outreach. Recommendations also included advances needed for the future especially in long duration storage, energy delivery and hosting capacity as well as policies that facilitate the transition away from fossil fuels including a non-consensus component of placing a temporary moratorium on new or repowered fossil fuel fired facilities.

The latter was met with mixed reactions. Panel members such as Raya Salter expressed support for the moratorium while Gavin Donohue (Independent Power Producers of New York) indicated that it would be "bad for investment." Panel chair, Sara Osgood (NYSDPS) emphasized the need for managed, phased transition planning to reach the zero-emission target of the CLCPA, another recommendation that had full consensus amongst the Power Generation Panel members. There were also concerns with respect to resiliency. Donna DeCarolis (National Fuel Gas Distribution Corporation)

questioned the basis for decommissioning fossil fuel infrastructure noting that these systems can be leveraged with low carbon fuels.

### Next Steps

An integrated analysis is currently underway to evaluate the emissions reductions and societal costs and benefits from all Panel recommendations. This will be completed at the start of July 2021. At the next CAC meeting tentatively carded for June 8, adaptation and resilience recommendations will be addressed. The CAC will also hear feedback from the Climate Justice Working Group on all the advisory panels and working group mitigation strategies. Meeting materials from this meeting can be found [here](#).

### **Power Generation Advisory Panel – Monday, May 3, 2021**

*By: Anastasia Gordon*

The Power Generation Panel reconvened on May 3 to review public feedback and finalize its draft mitigation recommendations package. It will present these recommendations to the Climate Action Council (CAC) for inclusion in the draft scoping plan to achieve New York's climate law.

Chair and recently [appointed](#) Executive Director, Sara Osgood started the meeting summarizing public input that the Power Generation Panel has received. Amongst the 150 unique commenters, there was general support for renewables, energy efficiency, and energy storage as well as concern for the slow pace of the clean energy build-out and for equity, specifically affordability and the impact fossil fuel generation facilities in environmental justice communities. In addition, there were evenly split pro- and anti-nuclear comments and frequent calls for no new natural gas infrastructure.

The utility consultation group that was convened to advise the CAC and its advisory panels also provided feedback to the Power Generation Panel. The group stressed the need to maintain reliable and resilient delivery of energy, with energy storage playing a key role. Additionally, they recommended identifying infrastructure needs and expediting local transmission projects to support and integrate renewables. Lastly, the group emphasized mitigating cost impacts to consumers, particularly vulnerable customers and urged the Panel not to take options off the table like alternative fuels or by instituting a moratorium on new/re-powered fossil-fuel generation.

Next, the Panel reviewed changes made to its draft recommendations. A new enabling initiative on demand response was added while amendments were made to strengthen other recommendations. Panel members expressed their support for the amendments especially with regards adding a public education and outreach component and establishing a new docket that establishes binding targets and creates a dedicated funding mechanism for energy storage.

The meeting ended with expressions of gratitude for the work and collaboration put into developing the mitigation recommendations. Osgood asked the Panel to remain available for further collaboration noting that Panel meetings will shift to an as needed basis. Moving forward, Panel meetings will be chaired by the Interim Chair of the PSC, John Howard. The Panel will present its final recommendations at the next CAC meeting on May 10. Meeting materials from this meeting can be found [here](#).

April 2021

## **Transportation Panel – Friday, April 30, 2021**

*By Anastasia Gordon*

On April 30, the Transportation Panel held one more expert roundtable before presenting their final mitigation recommendations to the Climate Action Council (CAC) at its meeting on May 10. The purpose of the roundtable was to garner input on supportive policies and potential market-based approaches to reduce emissions and drive innovation in the freight and logistics sector.

Commissioner Marie Therese Dominguez (NYSDOT) and chair of the Transportation Panel kicked off the meeting with staggering statics. She noted that freight movement is projected to increase by 50% by weight and 75% by value emphasizing its prominent role it must play in reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of the transportation sector. Then the moderator of the roundtable Professor Burak Kaza (Whitman School of Management, Syracuse University) introduced the panelists, which included:

- Mike Rush, [Association of American Railroads](#)
- Mike Roeth, [North American Council for Freight Efficiency](#)
- Glen Kedzie, [American Trucking Associations](#)
- Matt Menner, [Transplace](#)
- Victor Bonett, [Amazon](#)

Professor Kaza asked a series of questions to the panelists with the aim of garnering input on potential policies and market-based approaches that would support companies transition to low carbon technologies. For locomotives, Mike Rush underscored the need for private-public partnerships and federal funding for research into an industry-wide solution. Glen Kedzie

also called for similar partnerships and leveraging state and national funding for research and development (R&D) for the trucking sector. He also joined Mike Roeth in the point of view that incentives are required for hydrogen-fuel and electric trucks as well as investment in the build-out of fueling and fast charging infrastructure.

Victor Bonett noted that Amazon supports policies that would accelerate interconnection to the grid, increase sustainable aviation fuels and support electric delivery vans. Amazon advocates for a clean fuel standard and for federal investment in R&D particularly in advanced batteries, electro-fuels, and hydrogen. Bonett also highlighted alternatives to last mile delivery like drones and e-bikes and the need to expand right of way legislation to leverage these solutions.

This led to a discussion on minimizing or redesigning packaging to reduce emissions from freight transport. Panelists also offered route modelling and imposing weight restrictions to encourage shippers to utilize light weight vehicles and fuel-efficient. Operational changes are also another way to achieve emissions reductions. While it was noted that “demand is demand”, panelists offered several suggestions such as autonomous deliveries or electric vehicle (EVs) charging/fueling during the day or rest hours to facilitate off-peak delivery opportunities.

Another topic of discussion was barriers to transitioning the sector. One barrier identified was weight penalties. Kedzie suggested waiving these for battery electric or hydrogen fueled trucks. There were also sparking concerns in relation to taking an electric truck to load petroleum and the need to teach truckers to fuel hydrogen or charge electric trucks. In addition, workforce development and the current driver shortage, especially in the trucking industry was identified as another barrier to the transition to a decarbonized industry. Panelists discussed the need to attract new, qualified drivers (particularly younger persons and women) by offering certifications/diplomas and increasing pay scales.

Contrastingly, Mike Rush highlighted that movement to autonomous trains can be pathway for railways. He also reiterated the requirement for a “tech game changer” and a national effort to decarbonize locomotives since their engines can last for decades and only 2 manufacturers exist. Kedzie also expressed the cautiousness of the trucking industry to transition to low emission vehicles. He reiterated that trucks also have long (15 year) replacement periods. There are also questions of whether infrastructure is keeping up with sales and high capital investments needed for higher classes of vehicles. Lastly, Bonett raised the issue accessing affordable renewable electricity to charge Amazon’s electric delivery van fleets.

The Transportation Panel will consider incorporating input from this freight and logistics roundtable in their recommendations, which they will present at the next CAC meeting on May 10. Materials from this meeting can be found [here](#).