

## **Statement of Save Ontario Shores on New York State Budget**

The Renewable Energy Siting Law passed Thursday, Apr. 2, has some minor changes from the governor's original budget amendment. Community groups were added back in as possible parties. There are additional opportunities to request a hearing. But the process does not give local concerns, local health impacts, and local environmental issues a chance against the looming "state energy goals" and the out of state industrial renewable developers who stand to profit from these projects.

New York Independent System Operator (NYISO) says the upstate grid is self-contained and cannot transport renewable energy downstate. NYISO also says currently planned transmission upgrades will be insufficient to transport renewable energy downstate. Since upstate electricity is 90% emissions free, New York cannot advance its renewable energy goals by adding more capacity upstate.

There are many ways to address climate change. Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo has chosen an upstate industrial path that will be expensive and ineffective, and he will do so with expanded authority to overrule local laws.

Local input has always been deemed necessary to properly review large-scale complex industrial projects before approvals are granted to build these projects. Local input is necessary to gauge impacts on a community's health, environment, economy and safety. Historically these responsibilities have rested with local governments through their local laws. Under prior energy siting laws, the State has been reticent to waive them.

Now the Governor has tightened the vise to crank out many sprawling 400 million-dollar industrial projects in a year. This will be accomplished by removing the "pre-application" phase that offered the local community an opportunity to impact the application before it was filed - and by waiving local laws.

With the decision to waive local laws comes the erosion of protections for citizens and communities from harmful projects. This obligation cannot be subordinate to a political agenda or to private developers.

Unfortunately, this legislation seems to have been driven by such an agenda and the private interests behind it. Usurping home rule harms the health, safety, environment and economy of communities.