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Rural New York pays price as NYC benefits

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Recently, Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced plans to spur economic recovery through public works projects. He listed renovation of LaGuardia Airport in Queens, rebuilding Penn Station in New York City, and building transmission lines from Western New York to New York City, allowing wind and solar energy generated upstate to be sent downstate.

All of these projects are focused on New York City, the governor's hometown.

The inclusion of upstate renewables shows Cuomo forcing upstate, with its 90 percent zero emissions electricity, to shoulder the burden of producing and transmitting energy downstate.

The governor has admitted the infrastructure is not in place to transmit this power to New York City. It will be years before transmission lines can be built. Local opposition to transmission and additional industrial renewable projects will be intense.

Every tree that is cut down, every property that is devalued, every bird that is killed as a result of these projects is for the benefit of his hometown. Every rural community torn apart by this controversy will suffer.

The industrialization of rural areas changes the character of communities, taking away the very reason people have chosen to live, work, vacation and recreate in some of these regions — all for the benefit of New York City.

Not one penny of Western New York money should go into New York City's electricity fix. The governor finds himself in a bind to somehow get the energy downstate, which is incredibly costly for a state that has an enormous deficit.

The governor's approach is a trifecta of bad: no comprehensive plan; decisions being made by committees in secret; towns, which will bear the brunt of these decisions, not even at the table.

How much will the transmission infrastructure cost? Will eminent domain be utilized? Why is there no incentive to build close to the energy need to increase efficiency and decrease cost? Where will the huge, toxic, flammable storage batteries, needed to make this system function, be placed?

New York state pushes industrial-scale renewable power supply without acknowledging these issues and without honestly communicating what New York will look like when they are through. And it is rural New York that will once again pay the price to benefit New York City.

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