

Testimony Virtual Hearing

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Climate Action Council Draft Scoping Plan

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I'm Pam Atwater, lifelong resident of rural New York and president of Save Ontario Shores.

The Draft Scoping Plan is not forthcoming about problematic aspects of what's being proposed. The 330-page Plan mentions land-based wind twice but doesn't reference any targets even though, along with large-scale solar, industrial onshore wind is a foundational component of the Plan. Those numbers are found by digging through over 500 pages of appendices.

Plans for a "statewide public education campaign to inform New Yorkers about the climate crisis" and the benefits of large-scale renewables, as well as economic incentives, are being put forward in the hopes of gaining more support. This will not make industrialization of rural communities acceptable or change the basic geographic limitations and negative impacts to intangibles such as open space, quiet nights, and close community relationships.

Rural communities reject the stereotype that they are uninformed about climate change. We have been at the receiving end of developer tactics where negative impacts are downplayed and benefits inflated. Documents acquired through Freedom of Information requests have shown how state agency employees have been influenced by developer lobbyists and have shown disregard for citizen concerns and for any information that is not acceptable to developers.

The Plan actually acknowledges negative health impacts from wind turbine noise but doesn't acknowledge the immediate need for solutions to this problem. More stringent noise standards are needed in state permitting proceedings. The Plan must take into account the potential number of people likely to be harmed by the 1.1 million acres of leased land projected for new wind projects and must include plans for reducing the noise impact on rural communities.

The Plan relies heavily on intermittent renewable energy sources without fully addressing the reliability of our energy supply. This gamble on the future will likely result in accelerating the well documented exodus of businesses and residents from New York State.

Thank you.