

What's Your Energy Vision?

Public Hearings: October 27 – November 18

Governor Cuomo and the New York Public Service Commission are undertaking a major overhaul of New York's energy policy called Reforming the Energy Vision (REV). The REV process will change utility regulations, energy ownership rules, programs for renewables and weatherization, and electricity rates. Over the next several weeks, the Public Service Commission will hold seven public hearings to hear from the public about these issues. Your participation is needed.

Make REV R.E.A.L!

Renewable, Equitable, Accountable and Local

For more than a year, the Public Service Commission and Governor Cuomo have been engaged in rule-making and major regulatory changes they say are aimed at moving New York toward a cleaner, more affordable, and more resilient energy system. The REV process could lead to dramatic increases in renewables and energy efficiency, open the door for greater local ownership and control over our energy resources, and empower New Yorkers to participate in reducing their environmental footprint and their energy bills. But this is not a guaranteed outcome. Utility companies and other for-profit companies are participating heavily in the process, and policy makers are pushing market-driven changes over public funding and regulations. There are major concerns among public interest advocates that REV will reduce spending on clean energy, create extra risks for consumers, and increase utility control over our energy system.

Environmental, social justice, and consumer groups are organizing to participate in the upcoming hearings, and we hope you'll join us. We will call for clear clean energy goals, focused on real renewable energy and energy efficiency, not false solutions like natural gas and nuclear power. We will demand that all New Yorkers have the opportunity to benefit from energy efficiency and renewables, and that the state dedicate funding for clean energy development to the communities that need it most. We will stand up for consumer protections and a seat at the table in making energy decisions that affect our lives. We will call for green jobs in our local communities, and express our desire for local and community ownership models that will best benefit our neighborhoods. Please join the organizing and help us spread the word!

This guide to the REV hearings was created by Alliance for a Green Economy. For more information about REV, visit the Energy Democracy Alliance website:

www.energydemocracyny.org

Schedule of Hearings

New York City

Tuesday, October 27, 2015

6:00 PM - 7:00 PM: Information Session

7:00 PM: Public Statement Hearing

New York University School of Law
Vanderbilt Hall – Tishman Auditorium
40 Washington Square South,
New York, NY 10012

Local Organizing Contact: Anthony
Giancatarino at the Center for Social Inclusion.
agiancatarino@thecsi.org

Westchester

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

5:00 PM - 6:00 PM: Information Session

6:00 PM: Public Statement Hearing

Yonkers Public Library
1500 Central Park Ave, Yonkers, NY 10710

Buffalo

Wednesday November 4, 2015

6:00 PM - 7:00 PM: Information Session

7:00 PM: Public Statement Hearing

Erie County Community College
City Campus Auditorium
121 Ellicott Street, Buffalo, New York 14203

Local Organizing Contact: Meghan Zaldivar,
PUSH Buffalo. meghan@pushbuffalo.org

Rochester

Thursday, November 5, 2015

6:00 PM - 7:00 PM: Information Session

7:00 PM: Public Statement Hearing

Rochester City Hall
City Council Chambers
30 Church Street, Rochester, NY 14614

Kingston

Thursday November 12, 2015

6:00 PM - 7:00 PM: Information Session

7:00 PM: Public Statement Hearing

Kingston City Hall
Council Chambers, 2nd Floor
420 Broadway, Kingston, NY 12401
Local Organizing Contact: Jen Metzger,
Citizens for Local Power.
jentmetzger@gmail.com.

Binghamton

Tuesday November 17, 2015

6:00 PM - 7:00 PM: Information Session

7:00 PM: Public Statement Hearing

Binghamton City Hall
38 Hawley Street, Binghamton, NY 13901
Local Organizing Contact: Adam Flint,
Binghamton Regional Sustainability Coalition.
flint@igc.org

Syracuse

Wednesday, November 18, 2015

6:00 PM - 7:00 PM: Information Session

7:00 PM: Public Statement Hearing

Clary Middle School Auditorium
100 Amidon Drive, Syracuse, NY 13205
Local Organizing Contact: Jessica Azulay,
Alliance for a Green Economy.
jessica@agreenewyork.org.

Make REV R.E.A.L. Talking Points

Renewable, Equitable, Accountable and Local

- R** **Make clean energy REAL. POLICY DEMAND:** Create enforceable renewable energy and energy efficiency targets for utilities. **WHY?** REV will create rewards for utilities if they meet certain public policy goals. But in the current proposal, utilities would neither be rewarded nor penalized for their performance on environmental goals.
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- N** **We need a REAL transition. POLICY DEMAND:** No more coal plant and nuclear plant bailouts, and no more permits for natural gas pipelines. **WHY?** REV is meant to move New York toward fewer dirty centralized power plants and fewer transmission lines and pipes. Bailing out coal and nuclear plants and building more pipelines is going in the wrong direction.
- E**
- W** **Include the REAL costs of pollution. POLICY DEMAND:** The health, environmental, and social costs of dirty energy should be reflected in energy prices. **WHY?** The REV proposal includes the idea that the market should value certain kinds of energy over others based on their value to the electricity system and to society. But the “Benefit-Cost Analysis” proposal largely leaves out public health costs, most environmental pollutants (including methane), and other societal costs or benefits in determining which resources to value.
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- L** **Only REAL renewables should be promoted. POLICY DEMAND:** Nuclear power should not be included in any standard along with renewables. **WHY?** The REV proposal would include nuclear energy in a “scorecard” along with renewable energy and energy efficiency. Utilities would look good if they had high percentages of nuclear generation, even if they had relatively low levels of renewables or efficiency. Our renewable standards must remain free from all dirty energy sources.
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- Q** **Remove REAL barriers. POLICY DEMAND:** Create policies to remove barriers to clean energy faced by renters, low-income people, people of color, and other oppressed groups. **WHY?** REV is a market-driven initiative, and markets tend to favor people who already have advantages. Without deliberate intervention and intentional policy to remove barriers and correct for injustice, REV will reinforce inequality.
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- I** **Address REAL racial and economic injustice. POLICY DEMAND:** 40% of the Clean Energy Fund should be directed toward communities suffering the highest energy and pollution burdens. **WHY?** The Clean Energy Fund is a proposal under the REV framework that would spend \$5 billion over 10 years on energy efficiency and renewable subsidies, programs, and research. Everyone contributes this fund, but because of inequities in access, not everyone can take advantage of the subsidies and programs offered. Low and moderate income New Yorkers make up 40% of the population of New York, so they should get 40% of the funds.
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- A** **Ensure REAL energy affordability. POLICY DEMAND:** Low-income people must have affordable access to a basic amount of energy to keep their homes warm in the winter, cool in the summer, and the lights on year round. **WHY?** More than 268,000 households in New York had their utility service shut off last year because they couldn’t pay their bills. This an unacceptable energy insecurity crisis.
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- L** **Make REAL business opportunities for people of color and women. POLICY DEMANDS:** Utilities should be scored on how accessible their online portals and REV marketplaces are to businesses owned by people of color and women. To the extent that utilities are directly purchasing energy resources from third parties, they should be required to purchase a certain percentage from minority- and women-owned businesses. **WHY?** REV will set up a new marketplace for consumers to purchase new kinds of distributed energy resources and it will also put new expectations on utilities to engage with third-party businesses. Utilities should be held accountable for providing opportunities to people of color and women.
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REAL consumer protections are necessary. POLICY DEMANDS: Strong consumer protections must be put into place so that ESCOs and other businesses cannot use deceptive marketing practices or predatory lending in the new REV marketplace. The PSC must commit to fully funding its oversight activities and penalizing bad actors. **WHY?** REV will make it easier for companies to market energy saving and energy producing products and services to customers. Without consumer protections, low-income customers and customers whose primary language is not English will be vulnerable to abuses, as they have been with ESCOs.

Facilitate REAL public information and input. POLICY DEMANDS: REV must be better publicized and better explained, and underrepresented groups must be consulted when policy is being developed, not just after proposals are fully formed. **WHY?** The process of developing energy policy should be inclusive and transparent so that it is not dominated by utilities and for-profit companies, but instead driven by the needs of the public. At every decision point, communities on the frontlines of energy pollution, energy insecurity, climate threats, and economic depression should be involved in determining New York's energy future.

Provide intervenor funds for REAL participation. POLICY DEMAND: Intervenor funds must be made available for rate cases so that consumer and environmental advocates can level the playing field with utility companies as REV implementation gets underway. **WHY?** Most of the detailed decisions around REV implementation will be made in utility rate cases. Intervenor funds would provided funds for consumers, environmental, and environmental justice groups to hire lawyers and experts to participate in these cases.

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REAL local ownership must be supported. POLICY DEMAND: Utilities should be required to procure a percentage of local/community owned energy projects in their territories. **WHY?** Local ownership provides the opportunity to keep energy dollars local and to build local wealth. Additionally, research shows that locally owned renewable projects experience less local resistance than projects owned by large out-of-the-area corporations.

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Create REAL local jobs, especially for disadvantaged workers. POLICY DEMANDS: Any company receiving ratepayer or public funds must meet high-road employment standards and hire over 50% of local residents. Jobs and community development benefits should be targeted toward achieving equity in low income and communities of color. **WHY?** Because people need jobs!!!!

Develop REAL local microgrids for resilience. POLICY DEMAND: Local residents should be given the opportunity to be decision-makers around climate resilience needs and to be owners of microgrid projects. **WHY?** As climate change increases the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, disaster preparedness is becoming increasingly important. Decisions around which locations in a community will be prioritized for keeping the power on must be made by all members of the community, not just utility companies and wealthy institutions.

Value the REAL work of community organizations and local governments. POLICY DEMAND: Community based organizations and local governments should be supported and funded as ground-level consumer advocates, clean energy enablers, aggregators, navigators, project managers and workforce coordinators. **WHY?** As New York's energy system shifts and people are being asked to participate as never before in changing how they use energy and becoming energy producers, local organizations and municipalities will be needed to help hold businesses accountable for their products and their workforce standards and hiring practices. This has been proven through programs like Green Jobs-Green NY and Solarized. They must be compensated so they can build sustainable and robust community services.