

I have recently entered the world of grand-parenting. I am, at the same time, both thrilled and terrified for these little lives. One of my sons and his family live in Pennsylvania. He and his wife work in the public sector. Both are seeing the financial gain of a few while poisoned ground water, air pollution and methane leakage that contributes to global warming are all around them. I am hoping that NY State will hold itself to a higher standard and that standard will bring young families home to Western NY who are looking to live in a cleaner, safer environment and a more just community. It is not about us anymore. We are responsible with decisions that will resonate far into the future. It is not about us..but it is up to us.

A study by the "North Carolina Clean Energy Technology Center with support of the U.S. Dept. Of Energy's Sunshot Initiative shows how the plummeting costs of going solar could already make it the more economical choice for energy consumers in 42 of the U.S.'s 50 largest cities." There are now living examples of entire countries moving to renewable energy such as the Island of Bonaire which gradually switched to 100% renewables (RMI.org). This actually created more energy reliability and jobs while lowering rates for its residents. Germany has a record setting 74% of it's energy coming from renewables as of last May ((Renewables International) and Spain has over 50% of its electricity from wind since 2013 (Red Electrica de Espana,REE), Denmark is at 39.1% and has plans to be 50% wind powered by 2020 (Bloomberg New Energy Finance). They have an overall plan to be fossil free by 2050. As of last January, along with these countries, the U.S is behind Portugal, Ireland, Greece, the U.K., Sweden, the Netherlands and Italy when it comes to utilizing our wind power (American Wind Energy Assoc.). The Province of Ontario hit 35% of energy supplied by renewables as of last September. Our closest neighbor has supplied energy and jobs with hundreds of proposed and accepted renewable projects including wind, geo-thermal and solar not to mention their feed and tariff plan. They have shown us that renewables can be profitable, bring jobs and preserve the environment (Clean Technica). NY State can and must strive to be part of this positive movement toward reason, sanity, compassion and away from greed, stagnation and lack of vision.

We need to harness our accessible renewable resources and realize the value of a progressive approach both to the environment but also to our longterm financial and security benefits. No amount of wealth or power can keep residents in our state safe from the dangerous and budget depleting weather events that are the result of climate change. No one can return our rivers and lakes to health if they are overcome with the salty, chemical laden and often radio-active waste from fossil fuel extraction. Homeland security is, indeed, less threatened with diversified energy production (not to mention the wars we can avoid fighting for oil). We can prevent this! We can do this! We can do this now. Let us work together with labor, with government, with community and leave a legacy of livable, breathable, drinkable NY State and planet earth for generations to come. My little grand-daughters are depending on you and me! Thank you. Sara Schultz, Williamsville, NY14221