

# Opinion

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Another Voice / Electrical generation

## **Another Voice: Offshore wind is part of the clean energy future**

Updated: May 4, 2016, 05:20 PM Published: May 5, 2016, 12:01 AM

By Ellen C. Banks

The effects of climate change, predicted decades ago, are happening now: year after year of record global heat, severe storms, drought and polar melting. It is a moral and economic imperative to stop burning fossil fuels to slow these effects.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo has announced a goal for New York State of 50 percent renewable electrical generation by 2030, and the Paris climate talks resulted in an international agreement to restrain the global temperature rise. Pope Francis calls on all people to heed “the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor,” reminding us that poor nations will suffer the most from climate change.

Here in Western New York, hydropower from Niagara Falls is part of the 50 percent goal. We have our wind farms, though many more are needed, and will soon manufacture highly efficient solar panels.

While some complain that new renewable power would go downstate to New York City, the reality is that we are all on one grid and every part of the state needs to be moving toward solutions.

Analysis of the state’s power goals shows that we cannot get to “50 by 30” without offshore wind. Moreover, climate scientists and activists warn that an even more ambitious goal of 100 percent renewable energy, including electrical generation, transportation and heating of buildings, must be reached by 2050 to avoid catastrophic outcomes.

Most of the world’s major cities are vulnerable to ocean level rise, but the same oceans that threaten their existence can be part of the solution. Our downstate neighbors are making progress toward an offshore wind development in the Atlantic Ocean south of Long Island. This project is planned for about 15 miles offshore and will be almost invisible from shore, with siting to avoid bird migration paths. Another offshore wind project is underway near Rhode Island.

The Great Lakes also have much potential for wind power and a demonstration project is in the works on the Ohio Lake Erie shore. Offshore wind has been very successful in Europe, especially in Britain, Belgium, Ireland and Denmark – Denmark routinely gets 40 percent of its power from wind.

Unchecked climate change would be devastating not only to human civilization but also to many animal and plant species. Mining and drilling for fossil fuels damages land, air and water, all harmful to wildlife, and climate disruption affects habitats, migration and food sources. We have become the dominant species on this planet, and it is up to us to protect human, animal and plant life on our planet with a clean renewable energy future that includes offshore wind.

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