On Sept. 10, United Nations secretary general, António Guterres, sounded the alarm saying “We face a direct existential threat...climate change is moving faster than we are...if we do not change course by 2020, we risk missing the point where we can avoid runaway climate change, with disastrous consequences...”

That same day Congressman Brian Higgins became a co-sponsor of a bill that directly addresses Guterres’ dire warning: the OFF Fossil Fuels Act mandates a complete switch to renewable sources of energy by 2035.

This means 17 years from now: 100 percent of our electricity will be generated from wind, solar PV and hydro; 100 percent of all new car
sales be zero emission; 100 percent of all train engines be electrified.

The OFF Act also places a moratorium on federal permits for new fossil fuel infrastructure, such as interstate pipelines, but allows continued maintenance of the current fossil fuel infrastructure.

With Higgins’ endorsement, 16 of the 17 New York State congressional Democrats are now co-sponsors of the OFF Act, which underscores mounting criticism that the aging New York State Climate and Community Protection Act is too timid a response to the effects of climate change.

Equally worrisome, solar PV growth rate in New York State is now an abysmal zero percent. Prior to 2015 and 10 years previous, growth was a phenomenal 64 percent per year. What happened? Who pulled the plug on solar PV?

2020 is almost tomorrow. The time to act is

Charley Bowman, co-chair

Environmental Justice Task Force

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