The New York State Legislature and Gov. Andrew Cuomo are considering important climate legislation. Hallmarks of the proposed law would be to significantly reduce human-caused greenhouse gas emissions of carbon dioxide, methane and other heat-trapping gases, and to codify into law our state's goal of producing at least 50% of our electricity from renewable sources by 2030. This legislation will keep New York on path with other states and countries taking needed steps to limit the effects of climate change which are already occurring.

The Parliament of the United Kingdom, along with Scotland and Wales, declared a “climate emergency” this month. France, Germany, and many other European countries have announced their intention to be completely carbon neutral by 2050. California has enacted a law requiring that by 2045, 100% of electric sales to customers and state agencies be produced by carbon free renewable energy resources.

Climate legislation is necessary to protect our children and the Earth. The world has reached 415 parts per million of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere, the highest level in over 2.5 million years and in human history. Our own federal government issued a report last year that the effects of global climate change are already present in the United States, and predicted huge economic and agricultural losses unless climate change is curbed.

New York climate legislation deserves the support of our citizens. Not only is limiting greenhouse gas emissions necessary, but it will also be financially beneficial in creating new jobs and financial opportunities.

The Climate and Community Protection Act includes provisions to protect workers and communities, to ensure good paying jobs in renewable energy development, and to create widespread job development throughout the state.

Robert M. Ciesielski

Energy Committee Chairman

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