

Letter: Cryptocurrency will define governor's political legacy

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Dresden, a small community on Seneca Lake, has been the epicenter of the discussion of cryptocurrency mining. Earlier this month, the [Greenidge Generating Station](#), the sole source of power for an expanding bitcoin mining operation, was [denied an air quality permit](#) by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. If Gov. Kathy Hochul thinks that passing the decision to an administrator will resolve the issue, [India Walton's July 9 Another Voice column](#) calling on her to approve the moratorium on crypto mining hopefully serves as a wakeup call.

The Legislature passed the Cryptocurrency Mining Center Moratorium [\(S.6486-D/A.7389-C\)](#) in response to the threat of companies reopening inefficient fossil fuel powered electric plants to operate “behind the meter” to power “proof of work” cryptocurrency mining 24x7x365. Running all the time, mining for bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies is incredibly energy intensive. If currently announced plans for bitcoin growth come to fruition in New York, the miners would use the same amount of energy as Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Albany and Yonkers combined. And that is just one of close to 10,000 cryptocurrencies.

This is not one of those “somewhere else” problems. Bitcoin miner, Digihost, is waiting for a permit to reopen the [Fortistar power plant in North Tonawanda](#). The moratorium would require the state to do an environmental impact statement to determine if these operations are in compliance with state's [Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act](#). Cities, like [Plattsburgh](#) and [Niagara Falls](#) already have a crypto moratorium in place. In Niagara Falls, the reviews done during the moratorium pointed out a need to restrict noise levels and to replace “grid energy with renewable energy.”

The cryptocurrency moratorium may be the defining moment of the Hochul administration. If she signs the bill, she sides with the health of New York residents. If not, it's a sign that our current governor has sided with corporate interests over our state's climate mandates.

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