

## Another Voice: Looking beyond wind, solar as climate solutions

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I have long been an opponent of the push to blanket upstate with industrial solar and wind installations. These taxpayer-subsidized boondoggles, sold as green energy “solutions,” only benefit developers seeking to cash in and politicians seeking bragging rights. Taxpayers and ratepayers, who must finance never-ending subsidies, lose out.

In the rush to “do something,” government willfully ignores the environmental damage caused by these projects. The manufacture, installation and maintenance of wind and solar require the carbon technologies they are supposed to replace. Farmland is sacrificed and carbon-sequestering forests are clear-cut for these hideous industrial arrays.

This is a high price to pay, and for what? A 2018 study by **Harvard researchers** found the warming effect of wind turbines exceeded their emissions reductions for the first century of operation (although the lifecycle of turbines is 20 years, at best). Landfills in the U.S. are filling with tens of thousands of turbine blades that will take centuries to decompose. And who can forget the calamitous power outages in Texas last winter, which were due, in part, to frozen wind turbines.

We have alternatives that will likely yield better results:

**Focus on small-scale renewable projects that directly power homes, farms and businesses.** They are more cost-effective and reduce strain on New York’s aging electrical grid.

**Upgrade our electrical grid before bringing on new power generation.** Modernizing our grid would increase electricity output by 30%, according to the Independent Power Producers of New York.

**Use natural gas electrical plants.** Natural gas is abundant in our region and lower in emissions than other fossil fuels. It's far better for the environment than importing electricity from coal-fired plants in other states.

**Stop importing electricity.** New York imports power from other states, ramping up emissions at dirty coal-fired plants. It's a carbon-emissions shell game and egregious hypocrisy.

**Expand safe nuclear power.** The countries with the lowest emissions effectively and safely integrated nuclear power.

**Approve new pipelines.** Killing oil and natural gas pipelines doesn't decrease demand; it just makes oil and gas more expensive and more dangerous to import.

**Expand hydroelectric power.** New York State is home to hundreds of dams and reservoirs. These existing reservoirs could be converted to hydropower plants and generate clean, renewable energy.

A genuine commitment to reducing emissions starts by recognizing the false promises of wind and solar, and the agendas of those pushing them. We should look at practical solutions that are right in front of us while also tapping into America's history of innovation to incentivize new technologies. This will allow us to advance our energy goals without creating new problems in the process.

Sen. George Borrello, R-Sunset Bay, represents New York's 57th Senate District.

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