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# Public Awareness/Action Drives Responses To Climate Change

WAMC Northeast Public Radio | By [Dave Lucas](#)

Published September 20, 2019 at 11:37 AM EDT

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Sane Energy Project /

Activists converged on a state Public Service Commission meeting in Albany to urge the panel to take action on climate and energy affordability.

Millions of people are participating in a climate strike today, walking out of schools, homes, and workplaces to bring awareness to the urgency of global climate change.

Ahead of the international day of climate emergency protest, activists Thursday converged on a state Public Service Commission meeting in Albany to urge

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Lee Ziesche is Community Engagement Coordinator for Sane Energy Project.

"Communities from across New York and pitch their regulators in a time of climate crisis to protect them from fracked gas infrastructure. It's ridiculous. We shouldn't have to have been here today. For years Sane Energy Project has been working alongside thousands of New Yorkers to stop the massive buildout of fracked gas infrastructures. And for a long time we've been focused on agencies like the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. But what we're realizing is that so much of this power actually lies with the Public Service Commission, because they decide how the utilities are gonna spend our ratepayer dollars. Are they gonna spend them on more fracked gas infrastructures, or are they gonna do what the public is demanding and fund renewable solutions? "

PSC spokesman James Denn responded for a request for comment by email, writing:

"The PSC continues to play a leadership role in strengthening and improving energy efficiency efforts throughout New York State and its work is on track and on target and will remain so into the future. The PSC is mindful of its duties to provide good, affordable practical energy solutions to all customers, in line with the direction set forth by the CLCPA. No decision has been made in any of the referenced proceedings."

Citing the climate rally in Albany's West Capitol Park, former EPA Regional Administrator Judith Enck says public awareness is driving responses to climate change. "We are breaking records in terms of heat and hurricanes and wildfires. Young people across the globe are standing up ."

In Albany, environmental activists are welcoming news about a long-discussed power

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Kimberly Harriman is Senior Vice President of Public & Regulatory Affairs at the New York Power Authority. "What was originally proposed at the Sheridan Hollow facility was a CHP unit that would be powered by natural gas. Upon consultation with the community and looking at the governor's new law that was signed in July, the Climate Leadership and Consumer Protection Act, The New York Power Authority and the Office of General Services has decided to chart a path toward a cleaner, renewable project for the Sheridan Ave. facility."

A remote solar array will provide about half of Empire State Plaza's electricity. One possible site being eyed is state-owned land near the former Oneida County airport. "Specifically, the project entails taking an electric chiller plant which provides AC to the Empire State Plaza, and electrifying that. In doing so, we're gonna reduce the natural gas consumption and emissions by 18 percent at that Sheridan Avenue plant. In addition, with respect to the steel smokestack that is associated with the now decommissioned ANSWERS plant, we are going to remove that smokestack that is a reminder to the community of the ANSWERS plant operation, and that operation will never re-start again."

Additional solar panels and components of an energy-efficient lighting project will be installed at the Plaza.



**Tags**

- Capital Region News
- Climate Change
- New York Public Service Commission
- Judith Enck
- New York Power Authority
- sheridan hollow
- SANE ENERGY PROJECT

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## Dave Lucas

Dave Lucas is WAMC's Capital Region Bureau Chief. Born and raised in Albany, he's been involved in nearly every aspect of local radio since 1981. Before joining WAMC, Dave was a reporter and anchor at WGY in Schenectady. Prior to that he hosted talk shows on WYJB and WROW, including the 1999 series of overnight radio broadcasts tracking the JonBenet Ramsey murder case with a cast of callers and characters from all over the world via the internet. In 2012, Dave received a Communicator Award of Distinction for his WAMC news story "Fail: The NYS Flood Panel," which explores whether the damage from Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee could have been prevented or at least curbed. Dave began his radio career as a "morning personality" at WABY in Albany.

[See stories by Dave Lucas](#)





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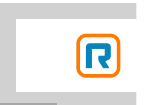
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# County Legislators Urge NY Gov. To Halt Sheridan Ave Fracked Gas Plant, Seek Clean Energy Instead

Dave Lucas, February 22, 2018

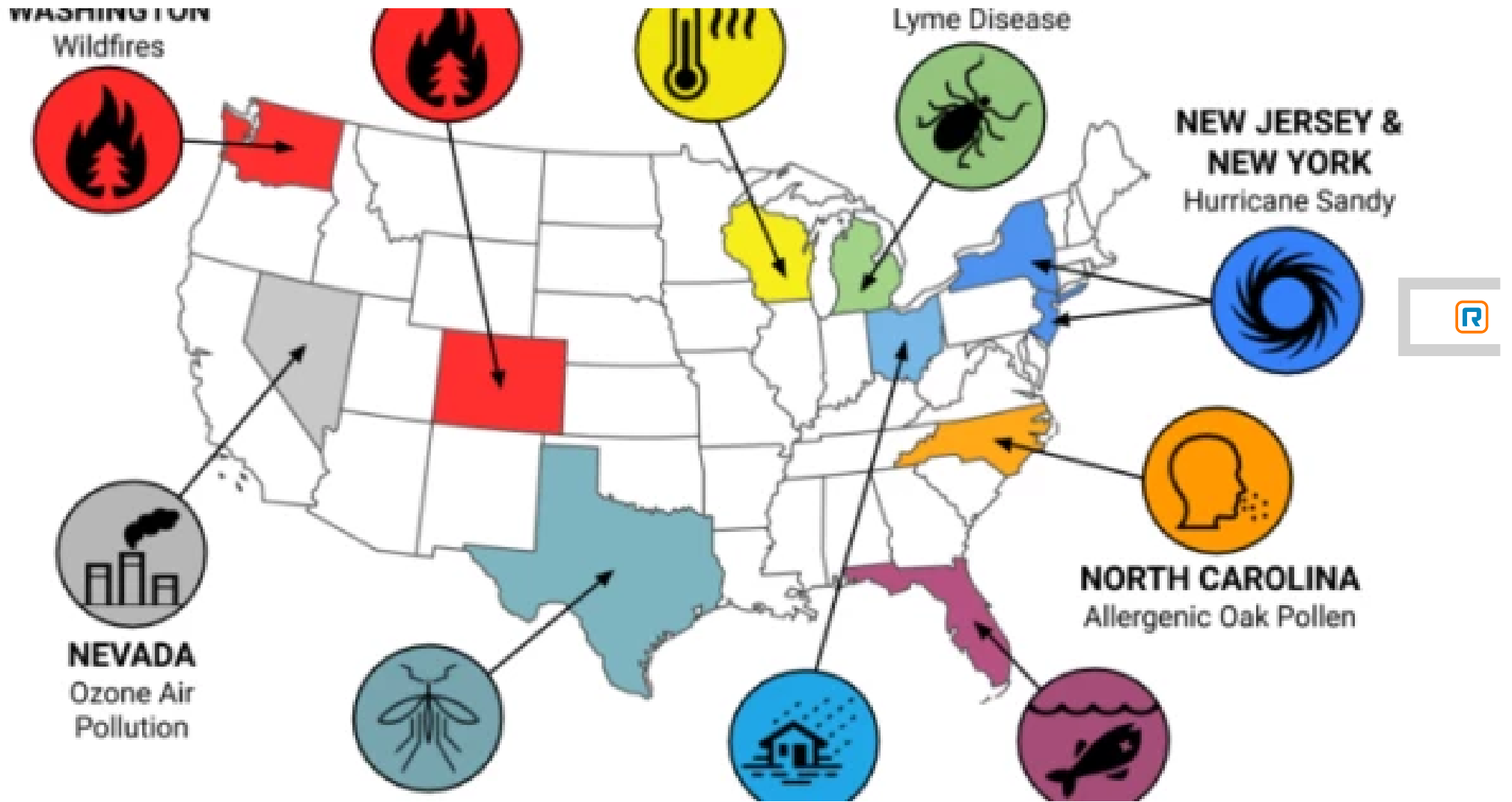
Local officials are bringing their concerns about a proposed natural gas power plant in downtown Albany to power the Empire State Plaza to the governor. A...

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