

# ***Renewable Heat Now Celebrates NY State Senate Passing NY HEAT Act***

*As Senate Leads on Lower Energy Bills, All Eyes On Assembly & Governor*



Today, the NY State Senate took decisive leadership on climate and energy and brought New Yorkers closer to cleaner energy and lower bills by passing the New York HEAT Act (S2016A/A4592A). The Renewable Heat Now Campaign extends our thanks to Senator Liz Krueger, the bill's prime sponsor, as well as to Andrea Stewart-Cousins and the rest of the Senate leadership for passing this popular and crucial bill. Now, as much of New York is covered with smoke and unhealthy air from a rash of wildfires caused by unusually hot, dry weather, we call on the Assembly to bring NY HEAT to a vote without delay.

“It is fitting that the Senate passed NY HEAT today, on a day that our state is blanketed with toxic air from climate-driven wildfires in Canada,” said **State Senator Liz Krueger, lead Senate Sponsor of NY HEAT**. “Continuing to expand the fossil gas system in New York State in the face of the climate emergency would be completely detached from reality. It is not only unsustainable, it is also unaffordable, and it is driving rate increases across our state. Whether it's \$200 million per year that ratepayers are forced to pay to subsidize gas expansion, \$150 billion ratepayers will have to pay to fix leaky pipes, or the continually skyrocketing price of gas, the status quo is an albatross around New Yorkers' necks -- let's give New Yorkers a break with NY HEAT.”

Failure to pass the NY HEAT Act into law this session will leave New Yorkers vulnerable to skyrocketing energy bills in a state where the lowest-income New Yorkers pay over 10% of their income on energy. Though the legislature acted earlier this year to pass the first-in-the-nation All-Electric Building Act (S562A/A920), when it comes to heating and cooling our homes, New Yorkers are still being held in the past by outdated laws that force us to use and expand toxic, expensive fracked gas—and pay \$200 million a year for it.

The NY HEAT Act will enable New Yorkers to enjoy modern, clean heating and cooling systems. And with low- and moderate-income New Yorkers currently paying 10% of their income and rising on utility bills, it will create a sorely needed cap on bills that saves those New Yorkers an average of \$75 a month.

With corporate utilities like National Grid demanding rate hikes as high as \$30 a month for gas bills, the Assembly and Governor cannot make New Yorkers wait another year for relief. If they do not follow the Senate's lead and pass NY HEAT this year, every rate hike New Yorkers face will be on them.

"The NY Renews coalition, representing hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers statewide, applauds the NYS Senate for passing the NY HEAT Act," said **Stephan Edel, NY Renews Coalition Coordinator**. "New Yorkers deserve a future where we breathe clean air and drink clean water; where everyone is safe and healthy in their homes; and our buildings and apartments are powered by affordable, renewable energy. The Senate's passage of the NY HEAT Act brings us one step closer to this vision. Now the Assembly can follow suit to lower utility bills for working New Yorkers and help our state unhook from toxic fossil fuels."

"We applaud the Senate for passing NY HEAT and taking the crucial step to protect New Yorkers from volatile energy prices. Low- and middle-income families could see savings up to \$75/month on their energy bills - money that could go to groceries, medicine, and rent. As we head into a hot, expensive summer, access to affordable and clean energy could be a matter of life or death, and the Senate's vote on NY HEAT shows that they understand what is at stake," said **Annie Carforo, Climate Justice Campaigns Manager at WE ACT for Environmental Justice**. "Now it is time for the Assembly to act and secure an affordable, energy future for the Black and brown communities most affected by climate change. The work is not complete without NY HEAT."

"Passage of the NY HEAT Act in the NYS Senate today signals that legislators are serious about, not just climate action, but climate justice," said **Kim Fraczek, Director of Sane Energy Project**. "This crucial bill magnifies the intersection of racial and economic justice by eliminating subsidies for fracked gas, while protecting priority communities from skyrocketing increases in their utility bills. For the past century, the fracking industry in partnership with monopoly utilities have boosted their profits by locking communities into their toxic business model. NY HEAT breaks the hold the fracking industry has on New Yorkers and moves us closer to a 21st century energy system."

"We appreciate the State Senate's leadership in tackling the energy affordability and climate crises with the urgency New Yorkers deserve," said **Jessica Azulay, Executive Director of Alliance for a Green Economy**. "With gas utilities like National Grid threatening to raise rates as high as \$30 a month and another record hot summer approaching, Governor Hochul and the Assembly must stand up for gas customers, follow the Senate's lead, and pass the NY HEAT Act this week—not wait another year."

"We are incredibly grateful that the NYS Senate under Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins' leadership takes the climate crisis and the task of implementing our climate law seriously. The sponsors of the NY HEAT Act, Senator Krueger and Assemblymember Fahy, also deserve immense credit and gratitude for tirelessly championing this bill despite the usual headwinds of

obstruction and delay by the fossil-fuel industry and its sympathizers,” said **New Yorkers for Clean Power’s Senior Policy Analyst, Anshul Gupta**. “All eyes on the Assembly and the Governor now to see if they too can rise up to the challenge of protecting New Yorkers from spiraling home energy costs and a rapidly worsening climate.”

“The Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter applauds the leadership of Senator Krueger and her Senate colleagues for recognizing that all-electric mandates mean very little if we continue to allow existing Public Service Laws in New York to facilitate, subsidize and obligate the expansion of fracked gas infrastructure at the expense of ratepayers,” said **Roger Downs, Conservation Director, Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter**. “It is now the Assembly’s turn to pass the NY HEAT Act and rectify the crippling inconsistencies between our old energy laws and our new climate goals.”

“The Building Decarbonization Coalition applauds the visionary leadership of the New York State Senate, especially the bold, determined work of sponsor Senator Liz Krueger, in passing the NY HEAT Act. This legislation would begin an equitable, managed, phased transition toward neighborhood-scale decarbonization solutions such as Thermal Energy Networks to ensure all New Yorkers can reap the economic, health, and climate benefits of pollution-free homes. The New York State Assembly must pass the NY HEAT Act by the end of this session or leave New Yorkers holding the bag for gas utility spending that is driving up monthly gas bills, blocking adoption of neighborhood-scale decarbonization, and accelerating climate change. The Assembly must act now to remove critical barriers to implementing New York’s Climate Law and pass the NY HEAT Act this session,” said **Lisa Dix, New York Director of the Building Decarbonization Coalition**.

"The Senate should be applauded for its leadership in passing the NY HEAT Act," said **Michael Hernandez, Rewiring America’s New York State Policy Director**. "Let's get it done this session on behalf of ratepayers being forced to subsidize a future stranded asset. Let's turn the page and focus on building better homes for our families and communities."

“The HEAT Act will save New Yorkers money, cut pollution in our homes, and help shift New York to a healthier all-electric future, all while creating good jobs,” said **Liz Moran, New York Policy Advocate for Earthjustice**. “We’re thrilled to see it cross a key hurdle today with climate and clean air champions in the New York State Senate standing up against fossil fuel industry lies and voting to pass it. We thank Senator Krueger for her leadership and urge the Assembly to pass the HEAT Act before the legislative session is scheduled to end. There’s no reason for the Assembly to hesitate on a win-win for New Yorkers' wallets and the climate.”

"Today's passage of the NY HEAT Act in the State Senate puts us another step closer to a healthier, fairer, and greener New York. Credit goes to Senator Krueger and the entire Senate Majority for their leadership in advancing this legislation,” said **Conor Bambrick, Director of Policy for Environmental Advocates NY**. “But our journey doesn't stop here - we now call on the New York State Assembly to seize this momentum, advance this transformative bill, and solidify our commitment to a sustainable and equitable future for every New Yorker."

“The Senate passing the NY HEAT Act today is a common-sense step – it will save New Yorkers' money on our energy bills while weaning the state off our ruinous reliance on fossil fuels,” said **Alex Beauchamp, Northeast Region Director at Food & Water Watch**. “Now, in the final two days of the legislative session, all eyes turn to the Assembly and Speaker Heastie. The Assembly must follow the Senate’s lead and pass NY HEAT now. It’s time for Speaker Heastie and the Assembly to show some leadership and get this done.”

“We commend the New York State Senate for its leadership in championing the timely implementation of the Climate Act of 2019 and the Climate Action Council’s Scoping Plan recommendations with its passage of the NY HEAT Act,” said **Anne Rabe, NYPIRG Environmental Policy Director**. “We urge the Assembly to follow suit and pass the bill this week, being mindful that the State must move to a renewable energy future as we enter the extreme summer heat, which puts workers in agriculture, construction and other outside workplaces, as well as sensitive populations like the elderly and children at risk.”

“NY HEAT is the next necessary puzzle piece to the inevitable electrified future that protects people and communities, and assures we make only the right investments to efficiently and effectively get there,” said **George Povall, Executive Director of All Our Energy**. “We thank the Senate for their work to bring this long-worked-on slate forward and we call on the assembly to do their part to protect New Yorkers and enact this popular and practical policy now!”

“NY-GEO thanks the Senate for passing the NY HEAT Act confirming that NYS is a leader in addressing our climate needs and achieving the goals of NYS,” said **Christine Hoffer, Executive Director, New York Geothermal Energy Organization**. “The passing of this bill will level the playing field for geothermal heating and cooling and allow Thermal Energy Networks to bring cost-effective heating and cooling solutions to neighborhoods throughout NYS. The Assembly should not leave for the summer until they’ve passed this legislation.”