

# Hochul's nukes plan is wrong for N.Y.

By Manna Jo Greene

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New York's electricity prices are skyrocketing, up 23% over the last five years. Expanding nuclear power as Gov. Hochul wants to do will drive prices higher.

Building nuclear costs three to eight times more than renewables, and takes 12 to 23 years. Building solar and wind takes one to three.

Data centers don't justify nuclear expansion. If we want to build them (some New York communities decidedly don't), nuclear is the worst way to power them. Renewables plus battery storage would do it much faster at a fraction of the cost.

The Indian Point nuclear plant 25 miles north of New York City is shut down. But its owner Holtec is restarting other shuttered reactors, and repeatedly proposed restarting Indian Point's reactors and/or installing small modular reactors to power a data center there. Hochul said she opposes renuclearizing Indian Point. But that hasn't stopped Holtec, nuclear boosters, and some Republicans, from pushing for it.

Meanwhile Hochul is pushing nuclear upstate. She signed an agreement with Ontario to develop SMRs. Her Public Service Commission just approved her requested \$33 billion ratepayer-financed subsidy to keep New York's three remaining nuclear plants running 20 more years. Owned by Constellation Energy and located upstate in Wayne and Oswego Counties, these plants (including the nation's oldest and second oldest reactors) are well past their expiration date. The \$33 billion ratepayer bailout is on top of the \$7.6 billion one they're already getting.

In her 2026 State of the State address Hochul announced plans to build 4 gigawatts of new nuclear in addition to 1 gigawatt the New York Power Authority announced last year. "Go big or go home," she said, promising to build more nuclear "than has been built anywhere in the United States in the last 30 years." This would multiply nuclear generation in New York 2.5 times, compounding nuclear's negative impacts on our electric bills, health, safety, environment, and climate.

Hochul frames nuclear as a "reliability backbone" and key to implementing the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA), which mandates 70% of New York's electricity generation be carbon-free by 2030, and 100% by 2040. The state considers nuclear "zero emissions," eligible for subsidies and climate credits, as if it's a climate solution.

It's not. Nuclear's lifecycle carbon emissions are far from zero; they're nine to 37 times higher than wind or solar. Nuclear won't help meet climate goals, in fact it makes climate change worse by diverting resources from renewables, tying up money for projects that take decades or get cancelled.

The scoping plan for implementing the CLCPA, developed by expert panels with extensive public input, calls for wind, solar, and storage — not nuclear. Hochul is countermanding it, boosting nuclear while undercutting renewables by shelving the "cap and invest" carbon pricing program and declining to implement the Build Public Renewables Act.

“I am very frustrated and exhausted by the politics going on here,” said Assemblymember Anna Kelles at a recent joint legislative hearing on Hochul’s proposed budget. “The scoping plan [is] designed to create a pathway to meet the CLCPA goals that is the most affordable possible. I think we should follow it.”

“When we talk about how we reach our climate goals, about affordability, about reliability, the answer is all the same,” said state Sen. Pete Harckham at the hearing. “It’s renewable energy.”

New York’s climate law and implementation plan reflect this truth. Hochul’s nuclear boosterism contradicts it.

*Greene served in the Ulster County Legislature from 2014 to 2026 and was the environmental action director of Hudson River Sloop Clearwater from 2000 to 2023. These are her own views.*