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2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

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Introduced by Sens. BRESLIN, BRISPORT, GOUNARDES, HARCKHAM, HOYLMAN-SI-GAL, JACKSON, KRUEGER, MAY, MAYER, SALAZAR, SANDERS -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Procurement and Contracts -- reported favorably from said committee and committed to the Committee on Energy and Telecommunications -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee -- recommitted to the Committee on Procurement and Contracts in accordance with Senate Rule 6, sec. 8 -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the executive law, the public authorities law and the public buildings law, in relation to the utilization of renewable energy at state-owned facilities in Albany

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Renewable
2 Capitol Act".

3 § 2. The executive law is amended by adding a new section 204 to read
4 as follows:

5 § 204. Renewable capitol project. 1. For the purpose of this section,
6 the following terms shall have the following meanings:

7 (a) The "advisory committee" shall mean the committee established
8 pursuant to paragraph (a) of subdivision three of this section.

9 (b) The "CLCPA" shall mean the New York state climate leadership and
10 community protection act enacted as chapter one hundred six of the laws
11 of two thousand nineteen, as it shall from time to time be amended.

12 (c) "Co-pollutants" shall have the same meaning as set forth in subdi-
13 vision three of section 75-0101 of the environmental conservation law.

14 (d) "Emergency generator" shall mean the set of diesel generators
15 located on Sheridan Avenue in Albany, New York as of the effective date
16 of this section, that are intended to power the empire state plaza

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 complex during an emergency fault condition causing an interruption to
2 normal electricity service from the grid.

3 (e) "Empire state plaza complex" or the "complex" shall mean the
4 complex of state-owned buildings and the land thereon in Albany, New
5 York that utilize the steam distribution network of the Sheridan Avenue
6 steam plant, including what are popularly known as Empire State Plaza,
7 the State Capitol Building, the State Museum, the Alfred E. Smith Build-
8 ing, the State Education Building, the Sheridan Avenue steam plant, and
9 the former Albany New York Solid Waste Energy Recovery System incinera-
10 tor building.

11 (f) "Greenhouse gas" shall have the same meaning as set forth in
12 subdivision seven of section 75-0101 of the environmental conservation
13 law.

14 (g) The "local community" shall mean the portion of Albany, New York
15 designated as the local community under the plan, which shall include,
16 at a minimum, the Albany Sheridan Hollow, Arbor Hill, Center Square,
17 Mansion, Washington Park, West Hill and South End neighborhoods.

18 (h) "NYSERDA" shall mean the New York state energy research and devel-
19 opment authority created under section eighteen hundred fifty-two of the
20 public authorities law.

21 (i) The "office of general services" or the "office" shall mean the
22 agency created under section two hundred of this article.

23 (j) The "empire state plaza decarbonization plan" or "plan" shall mean
24 the plan set forth in subdivision three of this section, and mandated by
25 this section and section ninety-one of the public buildings law.

26 (k) The "project" shall mean the work on the empire state plaza
27 complex mandated by this section and section ninety-one of the public
28 buildings law.

29 (l) A "power purchase agreement" shall mean an agreement between two
30 parties, the seller and the buyer, to enter into a contractual obli-
31 gation for the purchase of electricity.

32 (m) "Renewable energy systems" means systems that entirely generate
33 electricity or thermal energy through use of the following technologies:
34 solar thermal, photovoltaics, on land and offshore wind, hydroelectric,
35 geothermal electric, geothermal ground source heat, tidal energy, wave
36 energy, ocean thermal, and fuel cells which do not utilize a fossil fuel
37 resource in the process of generating electricity or thermal energy.

38 (n) "Sheridan Avenue steam plant" shall mean the steam plant facility
39 owned by New York state located as of the time of the effective date of
40 this section at 79 Sheridan Avenue in Albany, New York.

41 2. (a) Within three years after the effective date of this section,
42 the office of general services, in consultation with the power authority
43 of the state of New York, shall ensure that all operations that power,
44 heat or cool the empire state plaza complex shall entirely use renewable
45 energy systems. In satisfying this requirement, the office may demon-
46 strate that the amount of electrical energy credited to the complex
47 annually from renewable sources through a power purchase agreement or
48 similar instrument is not less than the amount of electrical energy
49 consumed annually by the complex. Notwithstanding this mandate, the
50 emergency generator shall be permitted to utilize non-renewable energy,
51 but the office shall be empowered to retire or convert the emergency
52 generator to wholly or entirely utilize renewables if possible.

53 (b) The project and the empire state plaza complex shall comply with
54 the CLCPA, and any rules and regulations issued thereunder, and, in
55 particular, section seven of such law; the statewide greenhouse gas
56 emissions limits set forth in section 75-0107 of the environmental

1 conservation law; and the targets established in subdivision two of
2 section sixty-six-p of the public service law. Nothing in this paragraph
3 shall preclude the office from mandating lower greenhouse gas emissions
4 limits or compliance with greenhouse gas emissions limits in a shorter
5 timeframe than set forth in section 75-0107 of the environmental conser-
6 vation law, or in mandating a higher percentage of renewables or in a
7 shorter timeframe than in subdivision two of section sixty-six-p of the
8 public service law. Except in regard to the provision regarding to the
9 emergency generator as set forth in paragraph (a) of this subdivision,
10 any action taken in furtherance of the project that leads to any
11 increase in the emissions of greenhouse gases shall be deemed inconsist-
12 ent with and in interference with the attainment of the statewide green-
13 house gas emissions limits established in article seventy-five of the
14 environmental conservation law and therefore shall trigger the process
15 set forth in subdivision two of section seven of the CLCPA.

16 3. (a) Within sixty days of the effective date of this section, the
17 office shall establish an advisory committee to advise it on the prepa-
18 ration, design and content of the plan. Such plan shall be completed no
19 later than January thirty-first, two thousand twenty-six. The advisory
20 committee shall consist of the commissioner of the department of envi-
21 ronmental conservation and the chief executive officer of NYSERDA, or
22 their designees, and additional members which shall be appointed by such
23 commissioner in consultation with such chief executive officer, as
24 follows: three representatives of Albany community organizations, at
25 least two of which are from organizations whose mission, in whole or in
26 part, is to represent the interests of the Arbor Hill and/or Sheridan
27 Hollow neighborhoods in Albany; two additional representatives of local
28 environmental justice organizations; one individual not employed by New
29 York state with recognized expertise in renewable energy; a represen-
30 tative of labor organizations; a scientist with expertise in energy and
31 climate policy; an engineer with expertise in energy (including geother-
32 mal) and climate policy; and the mayor of Albany or his or her designee.
33 The advisory committee shall meet at least three times annually, or
34 additional times as the committee shall by majority vote determine. At
35 such meetings, which shall be open to the public, the office, among
36 other things, shall report on the progress made in completing the
37 project and otherwise implementing this section. The advisory committee
38 members shall receive no compensation for their services but shall be
39 reimbursed for their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the
40 performance of their duties. All agencies of the state or subdivisions
41 thereof may, at the request of the advisory panel or the office, provide
42 the advisory panel with such facilities, assistance and data as will
43 enable the advisory panel to carry out its powers and duties.

44 (b) Each member of the advisory committee shall be entitled to one
45 vote. No action may be taken by the advisory committee unless there is
46 a quorum, which shall at all times be a majority of the members of the
47 committee.

48 (c) The office shall retain a third party to perform an engineering
49 study to be completed within one hundred eighty days after the effective
50 date of this section, which shall consider the matters set forth in
51 paragraph (f) of this subdivision and any other matters consistent with
52 this section that the office shall direct. For the purposes of this
53 paragraph, the term "third party" shall mean a professional engineer,
54 not employed by the state of New York, or an engineering firm, provided
55 that none of the engineers employed by such firm shall also be employed
56 by the state of New York.

1 (d) The office shall be transparent in its work to develop the plan
2 and shall maintain a website where a draft plan and other documents
3 relevant to its development shall be posted for public review at least
4 fourteen days prior to the first of the public hearings mandated by this
5 paragraph. The advisory committee shall hold at least two public hear-
6 ings at least sixty days prior to the release of the final plan, of
7 which one shall be held in the Arbor Hill or Sheridan Hollow neighbor-
8 hoods and one shall be held during the evening or weekend hours. The
9 advisory committee shall make provisions for online and telephonic
10 attendance and participation. At such public hearings, the draft plan
11 shall be made available in written form for those physically attending.
12 Provisions shall also be made for written comments on the draft plan.

13 (e) The plan shall contain recommendations on regulatory measures and
14 other state actions to ensure that the mandates in subdivisions two and
15 three of this section and section ninety-one of the public buildings law
16 are met. The measures and actions set forth in the plan shall include:

17 i. a timeline for planned steps toward the completion of the project,
18 including, but not limited to construction of the project and obtaining
19 the necessary permits to begin operation. The timeline should maximize
20 the potential for achieving, and if feasible making greater emissions
21 reductions than the statewide greenhouse gas emissions limits set forth
22 in section 75-0107 of the environmental conservation law and meeting the
23 other mandates of the CLCPA;

24 ii. measures to maximize the benefits to the local community, includ-
25 ing prioritizing the reduction of greenhouse gases and co-pollutants and
26 improving public health in the local community;

27 iii. measures to optimize thermal load sharing, energy efficiency,
28 demand response, and energy conservation;

29 iv. comprehensive consideration of renewable heat exchange systems or
30 a combination of such systems to meet the heating and cooling needs of
31 the empire state plaza complex, including but not limited to: geothermal
32 heat exchange with the earth, geothermal heat exchange with the Hudson
33 River, open-loop and closed-loop geothermal heat exchange with the aqui-
34 fer, heat exchange with potable water supplies, heat recovery from
35 wastewater sources, air-source heat pump technology, and thermal stor-
36 age, provided that such systems do not use combustion-based or fossil
37 fuel energy;

38 v. prioritization of electricity procurement from renewable sources
39 within New York Independent System Operator (NYISO) Zone F, especially
40 sources most capable of providing electricity serving real-time load
41 conditions of the empire state plaza complex. This shall include, but
42 not be limited to, consideration of projects that expand electricity
43 generation from ecologically-responsible, run-of-the-river hydroelectric
44 facilities within the region; and

45 vi. electricity service upgrades for the empire state plaza complex
46 necessary to support measures identified in this section.

47 (f) In designing the plan, the office shall be guided by any recommen-
48 dations contained in the engineering study mandated by paragraph (c) of
49 this subdivision, and any comments or recommendations made by the advi-
50 sory committee, including as to such engineering study. Such advisory
51 committee shall also be entitled to reject or modify any recommendation
52 upon a finding that such recommendation would be inconsistent with or
53 will interfere with the attainment of the statewide greenhouse gas emis-
54 sions limits established in article seventy-five of the environmental
55 conservation law, the climate justice provisions of the CLCPA, any rules
56 or regulations issued thereunder, or this section. If the advisory

1 committee rejects or modifies any recommendation, the original version
2 of the recommendations as set forth in the engineering study shall
3 presumptively not be considered by the office, unless substantial
4 evidence exists to support the study's initial recommendations.

5 (g) The plan shall prioritize project implementation efforts to maxi-
6 mize the creation of quality jobs in New York state and the local commu-
7 nity. The plan shall also designate the geographic boundaries of the
8 local community. In designating such boundaries, which shall include the
9 Albany Sheridan Hollow, Arbor Hill, Center Square, Mansion, Washington
10 Park, West Hill, and South End neighborhoods, the office shall consider
11 including in its designation any other communities that experience
12 impacts on their water, air quality, noise and traffic from the empire
13 state plaza complex.

14 (h) In the case of any conflict as to the requirements of this section
15 and section ninety-one of the public buildings law in regard to the
16 project, this section shall prevail.

17 § 3. The tenth undesignated paragraph of section 1005 of the public
18 authorities law, as added by chapter 55 of the laws of 1992, is amended
19 to read as follows:

20 The authority is further authorized, as deemed feasible and advisable
21 by the trustees, to acquire, maintain, manage, operate, improve and
22 reconstruct as a project or projects of the authority one or both of the
23 steam generation facilities owned by the state known as the Sheridan
24 [~~avenue~~] Avenue steam [~~generating~~] plant [~~on Sheridan avenue in the city~~
25 ~~of Albany and used to supply steam to state facilities~~], together with
26 any properties, buildings and equipment at the sites thereof or ancil-
27 lary thereto, for the generation and sale of thermal energy and the
28 cogeneration and sale of electricity for use by facilities of the state
29 within the county of Albany. All the authority's costs, including its
30 acquisition, capital, operating and maintenance costs, shall be recov-
31 ered fully from the customers receiving service from such project or
32 projects. Thermal energy and electricity not required by the state may
33 be sold by the authority to others. The authority is not authorized to
34 use refuse or refuse-derived fuel in operating the project or projects.
35 As of the time period specified in paragraph (a) of subdivision two of
36 section two hundred four of the executive law, all of the energy,
37 including but not limited to heat, cooling and electricity, produced at
38 the Sheridan Avenue steam plant shall utilize renewable energy systems.

39 Any agreement for such acquisition shall insure that the authority is
40 not liable or otherwise responsible for circumstances arising from the
41 prior operation of such facilities. The acquisition and purchase of such
42 land, buildings and equipment by the authority, and any actions taken to
43 effect such acquisition and purchase, are hereby exempt from the
44 provisions of article eight of the environmental conservation law. The
45 application of such exemption shall be strictly limited to the acquisi-
46 tion and purchase of such land, buildings and equipment by the authority
47 and such agreements with the state. Nothing herein shall exempt the
48 authority from otherwise applicable laws respecting the expansion,
49 conversion, operation and maintenance of such land, buildings and equip-
50 ment. For the purposes of this subdivision, the terms "renewable energy
51 systems" and "Sheridan Avenue steam plant" shall have the same meanings
52 as in subdivision one of section two hundred four of the executive law.

53 § 4. Subdivisions 2 and 3 of section 90 of the public buildings law,
54 as added by section 5 of part RR of chapter 56 of the laws of 2023, are
55 amended to read as follows:

1 2. "Decarbonization" and "decarbonize" means eliminating all on-site
2 combustion of fossil-fuels and associated co-pollutants with the excep-
3 tion of back-up emergency generators and redundant systems needed to
4 address public health, safety and security, providing heating and cool-
5 ing through thermal energy, and thermal energy networks, from non-com-
6 bustion sources, and to the greatest extent feasible producing on-site
7 electricity that is one hundred percent renewable. Notwithstanding the
8 provisions of this subdivision, for purposes of the empire state plaza
9 complex, such term shall mean meeting the requirements of subdivisions
10 two and three of section two hundred four of the executive law, and
11 section ninety-one of this article, as such requirements are applicable
12 to the empire state plaza complex.

13 3. "Highest-emitting facilities" means state-owned facilities that are
14 among the highest producers of greenhouse gas emissions and collectively
15 account for at least thirty percent of the greenhouse gas emissions as
16 recorded by the authority's Build Smart NY program established pursuant
17 to Executive Order 88 of 2012. Notwithstanding the provisions of this
18 subdivision, one of such facilities shall be the empire state plaza
19 complex. For purposes of this article, the "empire state plaza complex"
20 shall have the same meaning as defined in paragraph (e) of subdivision
21 one of section two hundred four of the executive law.

22 § 5. The opening paragraph and paragraph (g) of subdivision 1 and
23 subdivision 2 of section 91 of the public buildings law, as added by
24 section 5 of part RR of chapter 56 of the laws of 2023, are amended and
25 a new paragraph (l) is added to subdivision 1 to read as follows:

26 The authority is hereby authorized and directed to establish decarbon-
27 ization action plans for fifteen of the highest-emitting facilities that
28 will serve as a basis for decarbonizing the facilities to the maximum
29 extent practicable, and subject to any needed redundant systems and
30 back-up systems needed for public safety and security. [~~Decarboniza-~~
31 ~~tion~~] Except as provided in paragraph (h) of subdivision three of
32 section two hundred four of the executive law, decarbonization action
33 plans shall address the following matters at a minimum:

34 (g) [~~Identification~~] Except for the empire state plaza decarbonization
35 plan, identification of any parts of the facilities that cannot be
36 decarbonized, with explanations.

37 (l) In the case of the empire state plaza complex decarbonization
38 action plan, the items listed in paragraph (f) of subdivision three of
39 section two hundred four of the executive law.

40 2. [~~The~~] Except for the decarbonization plan for the empire state
41 plaza complex, the authority shall complete the decarbonization action
42 plans no later than January thirty-first, two thousand twenty-six,
43 provided that such date shall be extended for justifiable delay outside
44 the control of the authority, including, but not limited to, previously
45 planned or current major renovations or replacements to the facilities,
46 delayed permitting or approval by building owners, local authorities, or
47 other essential parties, external resource bottlenecks, pending or unre-
48 solved investigations into utility grid capacity or similar circum-
49 stances where crucial information is not yet available or determined.
50 Such extension shall be limited to the time necessary to address the
51 factors causing such delay. The empire state decarbonization plan shall
52 be completed by January thirty-first, two thousand twenty-six, and no
53 exclusions for justifiable delays shall be permitted.

54 § 6. Subdivisions 5, 6 and 7 of section 91 of the public buildings law
55 are renumbered subdivisions 6, 7 and 8, and a new subdivision 5 is added
56 to read as follows:

1 5. The authority shall be authorized to use the funding provided in
2 subdivision four of this section to prepare the decarbonization action
3 plan for the empire state plaza complex, to update or modify any study
4 or plan undertaken, with the goal, in whole or in part of reducing
5 greenhouse gas emissions applicable to such complex, or to perform the
6 engineering study mandated by paragraph (d) of subdivision three of
7 section two hundred four of the executive law, provided that such plan
8 or study in the view of the authority would provide information useful
9 for achieving the purposes of such section.

10 § 7. This act shall take effect immediately.