

STATE OF NEW YORK

2956--A

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 26, 2023

Introduced by Sen. HINCHEY -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Energy and Telecommunications -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the public authorities law and the executive law, in relation to authorizing the New York state energy research and development authority to develop a clean energy outreach and community planning program; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon expiration thereof

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

Section 1. Article 8 of the public authorities law is amended by adding a new title 9-C to read as follows:

TITLE 9-C

CLEAN ENERGY OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY PLANNING PROGRAM

Section 1910. Statement of legislative findings and intent.

1911. Definitions.

1912. Powers and duties.

1913. Funding.

1914. Reporting.

§ 1910. Statement of legislative findings and intent. 1. Findings. The legislature hereby finds, determines, and declares:

(a) New York will need to accelerate the deployment of renewable energy projects, both large-scale and distributed energy systems, in order to achieve the mandates of the New York state climate leadership and community protection act enacted as chapter one hundred six of the laws of two thousand nineteen (the "CLCPA").

(b) In addition to the authority's procurement programs and improved state permitting processes, renewable energy projects require collaboration between host communities and renewable energy developers in order to be successfully and appropriately sited and constructed.

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

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1 (c) Local land use decisions are important to meeting the goals of the
2 CLCPA, but communities often do not have capacity or sufficient tools
3 and information to effectively plan for renewable energy siting.

4 (d) Community concerns regarding the potential impacts of large-scale
5 and distributed energy systems are different, but both can provide ener-
6 gy cost savings for residents and businesses in the community, local
7 infrastructure improvement, local tax revenue and economic benefits,
8 local job creation, and cleaner air.

9 (e) There has been a lack of information about the local benefits and
10 impacts of renewable energy development and the best ways for communi-
11 ties to maximize benefits while avoiding and mitigating impacts.

12 (f) A multi-pronged approach is necessary to provide communities,
13 including disadvantaged communities as designated under the CLCPA, with
14 the information and tools necessary to support the appropriate siting
15 and acceptance of renewable energy sources, including wind, solar, stor-
16 age and transmission and distribution upgrades.

17 2. Intent. It is the intent of the legislature in enacting this title
18 to empower the authority to establish effective programs and mechanisms
19 to:

20 (a) Educate the public and build consensus on the benefits of a shift
21 to renewable energy, which will provide jobs, lower energy costs and
22 reduce price volatility, and reduce the need for fossil fuel based
23 power, bringing clean air and public health benefits and reduced green-
24 house gas emissions that lead to climate change and its impacts;

25 (b) Provide information and assistance to communities and local repre-
26 sentatives to promote the appropriate and successful siting of renewable
27 energy projects, including wind, solar, storage and transmission and
28 distribution system upgrades;

29 (c) Equip local governments with the tools they need to effectively
30 consider natural and working lands, the potential for co-location and
31 dual-use solutions, effective utilization of previously disturbed or
32 developed sites, and protecting disadvantaged communities when planning
33 for clean energy projects in their communities; and

34 (d) Help communities develop and adopt local planning, zoning and
35 other policies that support the sustainable and equitable development of
36 local clean energy through processes that ensure and enhance public
37 outreach, education and engagement, particularly in frontline communi-
38 ties that have historically been disenfranchised and discriminated
39 against in the local land use decision-making process.

40 § 1911. Definitions. As used in this title, the following terms shall
41 have the following meanings:

42 1. "Authority" shall have the same meaning as in subdivision two of
43 section eighteen hundred fifty-one of this article.

44 2. "Departments" shall mean the department of environmental conserva-
45 tion, the department of agriculture and markets, the department of
46 economic development, and the department of public service.

47 3. "Disadvantaged communities" shall have the same meaning as defined
48 in subdivision five of section 75-0101 of the environmental conservation
49 law.

50 4. "Renewable energy facility" shall have the same meaning as renewa-
51 ble energy systems as defined in section sixty-six-p of the public
52 service law.

53 § 1912. Powers and duties. The authority is hereby authorized and
54 directed to undertake such actions it deems necessary or convenient to
55 establish a clean energy outreach and community planning program to

1 provide information, resources and technical assistance to support the
2 siting and acceptance of renewable energy facilities, including:

3 1. Developing a community education and engagement program to inform
4 New Yorkers about the climate crisis and the benefits of shifting to a
5 clean energy economy and conducting outreach, providing information and
6 education, and building consensus on the environmental and local bene-
7 fits of renewable energy facilities. Such strategic education and
8 outreach shall include:

9 (a) Effective communication, engagement and public outreach to commu-
10 nities, including disadvantaged communities, to provide education and
11 information on maximizing the benefits that renewable energy projects
12 can provide while demonstrating strategies and solutions that are avail-
13 able to ensure that community impacts are minimized;

14 (b) Comprehensive education and outreach to local governments that may
15 host renewable energy facilities to provide objective information about
16 the impacts of clean energy development and mitigation opportunities;
17 and

18 (c) Facilitation of regional discussion forums for communities and
19 renewable energy developers to exchange information and ensure that all
20 have access to the same information necessary to support the appropriate
21 siting and acceptance of renewable energy facilities.

22 2. Collaborating with community stakeholders, the agriculture and
23 forestry sectors and the renewable energy industry to develop new renew-
24 able energy planning tools and resources for local governments. Such
25 resources shall include a publicly available clean energy development
26 mapping tool to help municipal representatives and local communities
27 make informed land use decisions and communicate local priorities to
28 developers.

29 (a) The clean energy development mapping tool shall be available on
30 the authority's website and shall provide sufficient information and
31 guidance to allow communities to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of
32 the potential for clean energy development and to plan proactively for
33 deployment that maximizes local benefit and minimizes impact on lands
34 with agricultural soils, farming, forests, and other competing uses.

35 (b) The clean energy development mapping tool may use publicly avail-
36 able data and shall be designed to facilitate participation by local
37 governments, renewable energy developers and others in existing renewa-
38 ble energy siting and planning processes.

39 (c) The clean energy development mapping tool shall provide mapped
40 information on agricultural, environmental, energy system and other
41 resources relevant to renewable energy siting, including, but not limit-
42 ed to: land use cover data; disadvantaged communities; previously
43 disturbed and developed sites such as large rooftops, parking lots,
44 landfills, etc.; agricultural soils and agricultural districts; forests;
45 wetlands, floodplains, and waterbodies; historic, cultural, and archaeo-
46 logical resources; public parks, preserves and recreational resources;
47 conserved and protected lands; hosting capacity; distribution, and tran-
48 smission lines; and topography as relevant to siting renewable energy
49 facilities.

50 3. Providing technical assistance and training to local governments
51 and other stakeholders on the use of such tools and resources, including
52 the clean energy development mapping tool.

53 4. Procuring the services of service providers, including regional
54 planning associations, non-profits, and community-based organizations,
55 to conduct outreach and education about clean energy benefits, develop
56 new renewable energy planning tools and resources, including a clean

1 energy development mapping tool, and to provide technical assistance and
2 training to municipalities to support the authority's responsibilities
3 under this section.

4 5. Managing, allocating, and spending any monies made available to the
5 authority in furtherance of this title as the authority determines to be
6 appropriate for the proper administration of the program created pursu-
7 ant to this title.

8 6. Requesting and receiving the assistance of the departments or any
9 other state agency or authority, within their respective relevant
10 subject matter expertise, to support the administration of the program
11 created pursuant to this title.

12 § 1913. Funding. 1. The authority may utilize fees collected by the
13 office of renewable energy siting pursuant to paragraph (e) of subdivi-
14 sion seven of section ninety-four-c of the executive law to administer
15 the program created pursuant to this title.

16 2. The authority shall annually notify the office of renewable energy
17 siting of the amount necessary to fund such program.

18 § 1914. Reporting. 1. Effective April first, two thousand twenty-four,
19 the authority shall issue an annual report regarding the effectiveness
20 of the program and providing recommendations for improvements to the
21 program. Such report shall include:

22 (a) the number and identity of communities and local governments
23 reached through the comprehensive education, engagement and outreach
24 effort;

25 (b) the number of regional discussion forums held for communities and
26 developers, and identification of attendees and description of outcomes;

27 (c) the number, description and status of renewable energy planning
28 tools and resources developed, including the clean energy development
29 mapping tool;

30 (d) the number and identity of local governments receiving technical
31 assistance and training on the clean energy mapping tool and other
32 resources;

33 (e) the number of service providers and contracts awarded;

34 (f) the amount of funds invested in the clean energy outreach and
35 community planning program; and

36 (g) any additional information relevant to assessing program effec-
37 tiveness.

38 2. The authority shall submit such report to the governor, the tempo-
39 rary president of the senate, and the speaker of the assembly. A copy of
40 the report shall also be posted on the authority's website.

41 § 2. Subdivision 7 of section 94-c of the executive law is amended by
42 adding a new paragraph (e) to read as follows:

43 (e) In addition to the fees established pursuant to paragraphs (a) and
44 (d) of this subdivision, the office, pursuant to regulations adopted
45 pursuant to this section, may assess a fee for the purpose of recovering
46 costs the New York state energy research and development authority
47 incurs pursuant to title nine-C of article eight of the public authori-
48 ties law.

49 § 3. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire December
50 31, 2031 when upon such date this act shall be deemed repealed; provided
51 that the amendments to section 94-c of the executive law made by section
52 two of this act shall not affect the repeal of such section and shall be
53 deemed repealed therewith; provided, however, that such repeal shall not
54 affect or impair any act done, any application filed, any right, permit
55 or authorization awarded, accrued, received or acquired, or any liabil-
56 ity incurred, prior to the time such repeal takes effect, and provided

1 further that any project for which the New York state energy research
2 and development authority has expended, or committed to a third-party to
3 expend, funds towards the development of a build-ready site prior to
4 such repeal shall be permitted to continue in accordance with title 9-C
5 of article 8 of the public authorities law notwithstanding such repeal.