

STATE OF NEW YORK

4842

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

February 13, 2025

Introduced by Sen. FAHY -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Procurement and Contracts

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. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as
2 the "Renewable 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 subdivi-
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
17 complex during an emergency fault condition causing an interruption to
18 normal electricity service from the grid.

19 (e) "Empire state plaza complex" or the "complex" shall mean the
20 complex of state-owned buildings and the land thereon in Albany, New
21 York that utilize the steam distribution network of the Sheridan Avenue
22 steam plant, including what are popularly known as Empire State Plaza,
23 the State Capitol Building, the State Museum, the Alfred E. Smith Build-
24 ing, the State Education Building, the Sheridan Avenue steam plant, and

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

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1 the former Albany New York Solid Waste Energy Recovery System incinera-
2 tor building.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

45 (b) The project and the empire state plaza complex shall comply with
46 the CLCPA, and any rules and regulations issued thereunder, and, in
47 particular, section seven of such law; the statewide greenhouse gas
48 emissions limits set forth in section 75-0107 of the environmental
49 conservation law; and the targets established in subdivision two of
50 section sixty-six-p of the public service law. Nothing in this paragraph
51 shall preclude the office from mandating lower greenhouse gas emissions
52 limits or compliance with greenhouse gas emissions limits in a shorter
53 timeframe than set forth in section 75-0107 of the environmental conser-
54 vation law, or in mandating a higher percentage of renewables or in a
55 shorter timeframe than in subdivision two of section sixty-six-p of the
56 public service law. Except in regard to the provision regarding to the

1 emergency generator as set forth in paragraph (a) of this subdivision,
2 any action taken in furtherance of the project that leads to any
3 increase in the emissions of greenhouse gases shall be deemed inconsis-
4 ent with and in interference with the attainment of the statewide green-
5 house gas emissions limits established in article seventy-five of the
6 environmental conservation law and therefore shall trigger the process
7 set forth in subdivision two of section seven of the CLCPA.

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

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

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

49 (d) The office shall be transparent in its work to develop the plan
50 and shall maintain a website where a draft plan and other documents
51 relevant to its development shall be posted for public review at least
52 fourteen days prior to the first of the public hearings mandated by this
53 paragraph. The advisory committee shall hold at least two public hear-
54 ings at least sixty days prior to the release of the final plan, of
55 which one shall be held in the Arbor Hill or Sheridan Hollow neighbor-
56 hoods and one shall be held during the evening or weekend hours. The

1 advisory committee shall make provisions for online and telephonic
2 attendance and participation. At such public hearings, the draft plan
3 shall be made available in written form for those physically attending.
4 Provisions shall also be made for written comments on the draft plan.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

39 (f) In designing the plan, the office shall be guided by any recommen-
40 dations contained in the engineering study mandated by paragraph (c) of
41 this subdivision, and any comments or recommendations made by the advi-
42 sory committee, including as to such engineering study. Such advisory
43 committee shall also be entitled to reject or modify any recommendation
44 upon a finding that such recommendation would be inconsistent with or
45 will interfere with the attainment of the statewide greenhouse gas emis-
46 sions limits established in article seventy-five of the environmental
47 conservation law, the climate justice provisions of the CLCPA, any rules
48 or regulations issued thereunder, or this section. If the advisory
49 committee rejects or modifies any recommendation, the original version
50 of the recommendations as set forth in the engineering study shall
51 presumptively not be considered by the office, unless substantial
52 evidence exists to support the study's initial recommendations.

53 (g) The plan shall designate the geographic boundaries of the local
54 community. In designating such boundaries, which shall include the Alba-
55 ny Sheridan Hollow, Arbor Hill, Center Square, Mansion, Washington Park,
56 West Hill, and South End neighborhoods, the office shall consider

1 including in its designation any other communities that experience
2 impacts on their water, air quality, noise and traffic from the empire
3 state plaza complex.

4 (h)(i) Any project that may be funded as a result of the renewable
5 capitol project completed pursuant to this section shall: (A) be deemed
6 a public work project subject to article eight of the labor law; (B)
7 require that the component parts of any renewable capitol project are
8 produced or made in whole or substantial part in the United States, its
9 territories or possessions, subject to a waiver provision similar to the
10 one contained in subdivision two of section sixty-six-s of the public
11 service law; (C) contain a requirement that any public owner or third
12 party acting on behalf of a public owner enter into a project labor
13 agreement as defined by section two hundred twenty-two of the labor law
14 for all construction work; and (D) require the payment of prevailing
15 wage standards consistent with article nine of the labor law for build-
16 ing services work.

17 (ii) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, all rights
18 or benefits, including terms and conditions of employment, and
19 protection of civil service and collective bargaining status of all
20 existing public employees and the work jurisdiction, covered job
21 titles, and work assignments, set forth in the civil service law and
22 collective bargaining agreements with labor organizations represent-
23 ing public employees shall be preserved and protected. Any such project
24 shall not result in the: (A) displacement of any currently employed
25 worker or loss of position (including partial displacement as such a
26 reduction in the hours of non-overtime work, wages, or employment bene-
27 fits) or result in the impairment of existing collective bargaining
28 agreements; (B) transfer of existing duties and functions related to
29 maintenance and operations currently performed by existing employees of
30 authorized entities to a contracting entity; or (C) transfer of future
31 duties and functions ordinarily performed by employees of authorized
32 entities to a contracting entity.

33 (i) In the case of any conflict as to the requirements of this section
34 and section ninety-one of the public buildings law in regard to the
35 project, this section shall prevail.

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

39 The authority is further authorized, as deemed feasible and advisable
40 by the trustees, to acquire, maintain, manage, operate, improve and
41 reconstruct as a project or projects of the authority one or both of the
42 steam generation facilities owned by the state known as the Sheridan
43 [~~avenue~~ Avenue steam [~~generating~~] plant [~~on Sheridan avenue in the city~~
44 ~~of Albany and used to supply steam to state facilities~~], together with
45 any properties, buildings and equipment at the sites thereof or ancil-
46 lary thereto, for the generation and sale of thermal energy and the
47 cogeneration and sale of electricity for use by facilities of the state
48 within the county of Albany. All the authority's costs, including its
49 acquisition, capital, operating and maintenance costs, shall be recov-
50 ered fully from the customers receiving service from such project or
51 projects. Thermal energy and electricity not required by the state may
52 be sold by the authority to others. The authority is not authorized to
53 use refuse or refuse-derived fuel in operating the project or projects.
54 As of the time period specified in paragraph (a) of subdivision two of
55 section two hundred four of the executive law, all of the energy,
56 including but not limited to heat, cooling and electricity, produced at

1 the Sheridan Avenue steam plant shall utilize renewable energy systems.
2 Any agreement for such acquisition shall insure that the authority is
3 not liable or otherwise responsible for circumstances arising from the
4 prior operation of such facilities. The acquisition and purchase of such
5 land, buildings and equipment by the authority, and any actions taken to
6 effect such acquisition and purchase, are hereby exempt from the
7 provisions of article eight of the environmental conservation law. The
8 application of such exemption shall be strictly limited to the acquisi-
9 tion and purchase of such land, buildings and equipment by the authority
10 and such agreements with the state. Nothing herein shall exempt the
11 authority from otherwise applicable laws respecting the expansion,
12 conversion, operation and maintenance of such land, buildings and equip-
13 ment. For the purposes of this subdivision, the terms "renewable energy
14 systems" and "Sheridan Avenue steam plant" shall have the same meanings
15 as in subdivision one of section two hundred four of the executive law.

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

19 2. "Decarbonization" and "decarbonize" means eliminating all on-site
20 combustion of fossil-fuels and associated co-pollutants with the excep-
21 tion of back-up emergency generators and redundant systems needed to
22 address public health, safety and security, providing heating and cool-
23 ing through thermal energy, and thermal energy networks, from non-com-
24 bustion sources, and to the greatest extent feasible producing on-site
25 electricity that is one hundred percent renewable. Notwithstanding the
26 provisions of this subdivision, for purposes of the empire state plaza
27 complex, such term shall mean meeting the requirements of subdivisions
28 two and three of section two hundred four of the executive law, and
29 section ninety-one of this article, as such requirements are applicable
30 to the empire state plaza complex.

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

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

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

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

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

4 2. [~~The~~] Except for the decarbonization plan for the empire state
5 plaza complex, the authority shall complete the decarbonization action
6 plans no later than January thirty-first, two thousand twenty-six,
7 provided that such date shall be extended for justifiable delay outside
8 the control of the authority, including, but not limited to, previously
9 planned or current major renovations or replacements to the facilities,
10 delayed permitting or approval by building owners, local authorities, or
11 other essential parties, external resource bottlenecks, pending or unre-
12 solved investigations into utility grid capacity or similar circum-
13 stances where crucial information is not yet available or determined.
14 Such extension shall be limited to the time necessary to address the
15 factors causing such delay. The empire state decarbonization plan shall
16 be completed by January thirty-first, two thousand twenty-six, and no
17 exclusions for justifiable delays shall be permitted.

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

21 5. The authority shall be authorized to use the funding provided in
22 subdivision four of this section to prepare the decarbonization action
23 plan for the empire state plaza complex, to update or modify any study
24 or plan undertaken, with the goal, in whole or in part of reducing
25 greenhouse gas emissions applicable to such complex, or to perform the
26 engineering study mandated by paragraph (d) of subdivision three of
27 section two hundred four of the executive law, provided that such plan
28 or study in the view of the authority would provide information useful
29 for achieving the purposes of such section.

30 § 7. This act shall take effect immediately.