

December 24, 2018

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

We the undersigned environmental organizations, social justice groups, and industry associations are writing to thank you for your recent commitment to a carbon free electric system by 2040. To put New York immediately on track to meet this ambitious goal, we ask that your Administration, through this year's State of the State and Budget announcements, commit to enough solar to power one million homes, including 100,000 low-income households, by 2023. Development of six gigawatts (6 GW) of distributed solar, in the near term, will put New York on a path to a carbon free future while addressing immediate needs facing communities throughout the state by creating good jobs, reducing customers' electric utility bills, cutting harmful air pollution and advancing environmental justice. Your leadership is critical as President Trump does his best to undermine and roll back national efforts to address climate change and endanger the hundreds of thousands of jobs in our growing clean energy economy.

Your administration has demonstrated strong leadership by making bold solar and climate commitments, including your recent 2040 carbon-free announcement and the Reforming the Energy Vision (REV) process that is attempting to build a new utility system centered on local clean energy resources and enhanced consumer participation. However, ensuring that progress is made in the next five years will be critical to both realizing these goals and making sure families, businesses and communities see immediate and tangible benefits as the state transitions to clean energy.

This commitment should include urging the New York Public Service Commission (PSC) and New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) to align their regulatory and programmatic efforts with your 2040 commitment and this important near-term 6 GW solar goal. The PSC and NYSERDA make the decisions that define and shape the solar market, affecting the growth of solar and which types of customers can most easily access and benefit from it. For New York to hit your goals, these agencies must incorporate them into their respective policies and decision-making.

A strong, near-term goal of 6 GW of distributed solar will focus your Administration's clean energy efforts on one of the most concrete and beneficial ways to build New York's clean energy economy and advance climate justice in the next few years. Solar can be the cornerstone of a Green New Deal as it is a tremendous economic engine for creating good local jobs all across the state, reducing families' utility bills, and increasing investment in resilient infrastructure.

At the same time, New York's transition to clean energy must transcend the status quo and ensure that every New Yorker has access to its benefits. This is particularly true for communities of color and low-income families who disproportionately bear the health, environmental, and economic burdens of our fossil fuel-based energy system and its climate impacts. It is crucial that this 6 GW solar goal include at least 100,000 low-income households served directly with solar to make this a more just transition and move towards equity in our energy economy.

We urge you to set a bold new goal, during your State of the State and Budget announcement, to build enough solar to power one million homes by 2023, and to establish the programs and policies needed to ensure that this ambitious goal is achieved through broad and equitable participation, including ensuring that 100,000 low-income households are served with clean, cost-saving solar. It is important that this path to 6 GW of solar by 2023 leaves a strong, sustainable solar industry in its wake that will be a significant contributor to reaching 100% carbon-free electricity by 2040.

We look forward to working with you to establish this goal and the necessary policies to achieve it.

Signed,



Acadia Center



GRID Alternatives



Alliance for Clean Energy New York (ACENY)



Work. Grow. Sustain.
HOPE Program / Sustainable South Bronx



Coalition for Community Solar Access



Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)



EARTH DAY INITIATIVE

Earth Day Initiative



New Yorkers for Clean Power



New York Solar Energy Industries Association (NYSEIA)



Pace Energy and Climate Center



Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA)



Solstice Initiative



Vote Solar