



May 2016 Newsletter

Community Choice Aggregation is Ready to Roll!

In April the Public Service Commission approved the creation of Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) statewide. Since 2013, CLP has been a leading advocate for enabling CCA in New York. The breakthrough order allows municipalities to take over the utility's role as the default supplier of energy to their residents and businesses, and develop programs that control cost, increase resiliency, reduce carbon pollution and keep energy dollars local. As CLP Co-director Jen Metzger stated in our press release, "By enabling CCA, the PSC has empowered our local communities over energy decision-making in a way that can support local goals as well as the Governor's ambitious statewide goal of 50% renewable energy by 2030."



Now it's time to move CCA forward in the Mid-Hudson Region! CLP has been laying the groundwork for an Ulster County CCA for more than two years, and a number of Ulster municipalities have expressed their support for CCA, including the Towns of Marbletown, New Paltz, Plattekill, Rochester, Rosendale, and Saugerties, the Village of New Paltz and the City of Kingston. Sullivan County and the Sullivan Alliance for Sustainable Development are also planning to develop a CCA for that county; and Sustainable Highlands has been working to promote passage of municipal resolutions of support for CCA in Putnam and Orange counties.

At the state level, CLP will continue to push for three important changes that the PSC's order does not include: 1) access to utility data on aggregated electricity usage and grid load early in the CCA planning process, to help CCAs plan effectively so our communities get the biggest bang for their energy bucks; 2) funding to help communities organize to form CCAs; and 3) enabling CCAs to administer local energy efficiency programs instead of the utility. Massachusetts and California both provide their CCAs with this authority, recognizing that the community is a more effective scale for designing energy efficiency programs than is a utility service territory.

The PSC order comes on the heels of the positive results achieved by the CCA pilot program of Sustainable Westchester (SW), which is managing the program for a group of 20 cities, towns and villages. The program recently received bids for power purchase from energy supply companies that

beat out the 12-month average price from Con Edison and New York State Electric & Gas Company – including a 100% renewable option.

To help move CCA forward in your community, talk with your elected officials and fellow community members about CCA, and encourage them to sign up for the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation’s webinar on CCA on June 9, with presentations by Kelly Connell and Ted Kelly of NYS Department of Public Service (DPS) and CLP’s Jen Metzger. And look for an announcement coming soon about CLP’s next forum on CCA in July.

Public Hearings This Month on the Proposed NYS Clean Energy Standard – Come Make Your Voice Heard!

The proposed **Clean Energy Standard (CES)** is New York State’s plan for meeting 50% of its energy needs from renewable sources by 2030. The power sector accounts for a significant portion of the state’s greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and the CES will help get New York closer to meeting its target of a 40% reduction in emissions below 1990 levels by 2050 (we are already 23% of the way there). The good news is that the PSC is now planning – for the first time – to *require* utilities and other retail energy suppliers to purchase fixed percentages of power from renewable sources, and to report the results. CLP applauds such mandated requirements, and believes that even greater reductions in fossil fuel-based generation are within reach if the state would agree to prioritize off-shore wind development. We also argue that New York must adopt more aggressive targets to improve energy efficiency—the lowest cost means of reducing GHG emissions—and a plan to meet those targets. The Cost Study prepared by the DPS on the CES supports the need for a comparable focus on energy efficiency: While the study found that the impacts of the CES on energy costs are expected to be modest, this finding depends critically on assumptions about total demand for energy.

The bad news about the proposed CES is that it would also require utilities and retail energy suppliers to purchase nuclear power, *which is neither clean nor renewable*. Governor Cuomo wants to spend up to \$3.5 billion to keep several upstate nuclear plants open at a time when their owners, Entergy and Exelon Corporations, want to close them because they can’t turn a profit. CLP believes that the CES should only support truly clean renewable resources and not incorporate give-aways to the nuclear



PSC Public Statement Hearings

Thursday, May 26, 2016

2:00 PM Information Session
3:00 PM Public Statement Hearing
6:00 PM Information Session
7:00 PM Public Statement Hearing

Kingston City Hall
Council Chambers, 2nd Floor
420 Broadway, Kingston, NY

power industry. A separate plan must be developed for training and job placement of displaced workers as well as for developing the renewable resources needed to replace these unsafe and uncompetitive power plants.

Join CLP and put your comments on the Clean Energy Standard on the record at the PSC's Public Statement Hearing in Kingston on May 26! CLP will soon circulate talking points for interested members of the public. Please also visit CLP's website for more information about the CES and the comments filed with the PSC by CLP, Alliance for a Green Economy/Nuclear Information Resource Center, and others.

Pilgrim Pipelines Generate Growing Opposition

By unanimous vote, the Kingston Common Council and the Rosendale Town Board last week backed legislation by State Assemblyman Frank Skartados (104th district), that would forbid the NYS Thruway Authority from allowing the Pilgrim Pipelines to be built within its right of way. The Skartados bill (Assembly Bill A9831a), co-sponsored by Assembly Members Skoufis, Mosley, Abinanti, and Gottfried, raises official opposition to a new level (find the bill online at: <http://bit.ly/1TAR1xT>). The two parallel Pilgrim pipelines would carry fracked and volatile Bakken crude oil and refined products made from this crude oil between Albany, New York, and Linden, New Jersey. About 79% of the project is proposed for the Thruway right of way (note: the Thruway right-of-way extends into what many people consider to be their backyards), with the remainder cutting through private properties, parks, and municipal lands.



TAKE ACTION:

- Please urge your local government to adopt a resolution of support for this important bill. A sample resolution of support can be found here: <http://bit.ly/1QZVisW>.
- Call the Governor, your Assembly Member and State Senator directly to let them know that the transport of hazardous materials along the Thruway is a bad idea, jeopardizing public safety and critical water and other resources in our communities.
- If your local government has not yet passed a resolution of opposition to this project, please urge them to do so. A sample resolution of opposition can be found here: <http://bit.ly/1sgyf9h>.

In the latest development in the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) of this ill-conceived project, the Commissioner of NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) ruled in favor of the DEC and Thruway Authority serving as “co-lead agencies” of the environmental review—a decision that flies in the face of united opposition by 29 towns, villages, and cities, who did not view NYSTA as an appropriate body to play a lead in the environmental review. The next critical step in the SEQR process will be the “scoping” to determine what potential impacts—environmental, community, and economic—will have to be considered in the environmental review. It is vital that the public (through

the public hearing process) and affected municipalities (through submission of comments to the lead agencies) contribute by identifying local resources at risk.

Grassroots opposition also continues to grow. On May Day (May 1), more than a 100 demonstrators turned out in the rain to show their opposition at three different Thruway interchanges. Find out what you can do NOW to stop the Pipelines at stoppilgrimpipeline.com.

LED Project Promises Huge Savings



CLP is working with Courtney Strong, Inc., Abundant Efficiency, and LightSmart Energy Consulting to bring the potentially very large economic and energy-savings benefits of LED streetlights to communities in the mid-Hudson Valley (including the Central Hudson, NYSEG, and Orange and Rockland service territories). On behalf of this NYSEDA-funded Mid-Hudson Streetlight Consortium, CLP recently filed comments with the PSC aimed at making sure that communities get a fair deal when purchasing their streetlight systems from the utility, and that the process of transferring these systems is standardized and made transparent to municipalities. The Ulster County Association of Town Supervisors and Village Mayors signed on to these comments, as well. You can find these comments here: <http://bit.ly/1qeoxCa> and can enter a public comment in support of our recommendations directly on the PSC website (www.dps.ny.gov) in the tariff proceeding for your utility: Case # 15-E-0745 (Central Hudson); Case # 15-E-0749 (Orange and Rockland), or Case # 15-E-0746 (NYSEG).

See CLP's website for more information about the Mid-Hudson Streetlight Consortium.

PSC Investigation into Central Hudson's Collection Practices

As reported in our last newsletter, Poughkeepsie-based community organization, Nobody Leaves Mid-Hudson, after months of investigating the utility's practices, found evidence pointing to unlawful debt transfers, failure to negotiate payment agreements in good faith, failure to follow shutoff procedures, and racial discrimination in collection practices. The PSC has agreed to launch a formal investigation that, according to the letter from DPS to the company, "is expected to include, without limitation, a review of pertinent Central Hudson documentation," including all records of communication, emails, recordings, and any and all communications between employees and members of the public (Letter from DPS General Counsel Kimberley A. Harriman to Central Hudson Associate General Counsel Paul Colbert, Dec. 29, 2015.) In a statement on the investigation, Assembly Member Kevin Cahill said, "my office will be following this investigation closely, and we expect a thorough and rigorous process, with meaningful consequences that will correct any illegal practices that may be revealed."

You can see the documents filed in this case on the DPS website (www.dps.ny.gov), Case # 15-M-0756. If you would like to make your voice heard on this case, you can submit a comment directly on the PSC website by clicking “post comments.”

Solar Leases

The Rosendale Community Center packed the house on April 4 for the workshop, “Scaling Up Solar: Exercising Caution with Large-Scale Solar Leases to Protect Area Farmers and Other Large Land-owners.” The information forum, co-sponsored by the Ulster County Climate Smart Committee, CLP and others, provided much needed legal, tax, and zoning information to landowners and municipal officials so that they can make more informed decisions about siting solar farms on their properties and in their communities. With the extension of the federal investment tax credit and a new state Clean Energy Standard on the horizon, developers have been scanning Google Earth and cold-calling landowners in the Mid-Hudson region with offers to lease their land. It is critical that land-owners and municipalities are prepared to make well-informed decisions to maximize the potential benefits to climate, the property owner, and the community, while minimizing unintended costs and risks. You can see a video of the forum here: <https://youtu.be/wBTzrFA0cRE>.

Community Solar

As described in CLP’s January newsletter, Community Solar (officially “Distributed Renewable Generation”) is now available in New York. Interested municipalities, organizations, or local developers can get in touch with others who are also working on specific projects through Co-Share, an initiative of the Energy Democracy Alliance. Visit cosharenys.org.



Citizens for Local Power (CLP) helps communities in the Mid-Hudson Region transition to a locally-based, clean energy economy. Combining research, education, advocacy, and project coordination, CLP supports community and municipal engagement in energy decision-making, transforming energy policy and practice to strengthen local economies, mitigate climate change and increase resilience.

— www.citizensforlocalpower.com —