

March 18, 2022

NYS Climate Action Council  
NYSERDA  
17 Columbia Circle  
Albany, NY 12203-6399

Submitted Electronically

Dear Co-Chairs Seggos and Harris and Members of the Climate Action Council:

We, the undersigned citizens, elected officials, and organizations in the Mid-Hudson Region, are very concerned to learn that our communities would not have an opportunity to provide in-person input on the Draft Scoping Plan, and write to request that at least one hearing be added to the schedule for our communities. Our region, like others, has an enormous stake in the State's plan to achieve the ambitious goals of Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, and deserves the opportunity to directly share our perspectives and concerns as part of the public comment process.

The Hudson Valley has a long history of environmental leadership, and the region has been at the forefront of local efforts to reduce the severity of climate change and bolster our resilience to its effects. Mid-Hudson municipalities comprise the majority of Silver-certified and Bronze-certified Climate Smart Communities in the state, and over a third of the 339 registered Climate Smart Communities. Over 60 Mid-Hudson municipalities are designated NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities, and close to 40 are working toward this designation. Our communities have valuable experience and perspective to share on the many recommendations contained in the Draft Scoping Plan, from decarbonizing buildings and electrifying transportation to building out renewables and sequestering carbon in our forests, and on our farms and natural lands.

Holding a hearing in the Mid-Hudson region is also essential to a truly equitable process. New York's Climate Law commits our state to an equitable and environmentally just transition. Meeting this objective requires a voice in decision-making by low-income communities and communities of color who have experienced a disproportionate cumulative environmental burden. The Mid-Hudson Region is tied with New York City in the percentage of our census tracts that have been identified as Disadvantaged Communities (DACs)--fully 45 percent of census tracts in the region, according to the Climate Justice Working Group's Draft DAC criteria. An in-person hearing is essential to providing Mid-Hudson DAC communities an opportunity to be heard.

We are grateful to you, as well as to State agency and department staff, the Climate Justice Working Group, Just Transition Working Group, and the seven Advisory Panels, for the tremendous time and effort you have dedicated to the development of the Draft Scoping Plan. It is a momentous achievement. Ultimately, however, the success of this effort will depend upon the support and engagement of all New Yorkers, and requires a robust and inclusive public process. We urge that you add at least one public hearing for the Mid-Hudson region and provide our communities with an in-person opportunity to be heard.

Respectfully,