



# Stop Energy Sprawl

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Rural communities are under attack by Albany. Current plans target forest and farmland relentlessly. The state's proposed energy plan would blanket a million acres of rural New York with glass, copper, and steel in an effort to serve downstate demand. Relying mostly on underperforming, intermittent solar and wind, it is a plan that has not worked at scale anywhere in the world.

Former Governor Andrew Cuomo created the Office of Renewable Energy Siting (ORES), which accelerated the rubberstamping of massive industrial-scale solar and wind development across upstate New York. Stripping local governments of home rule, the process lets powerful energy companies erect behemoth projects against the will of communities by voiding local laws and environmental review under the State Environmental Quality and Review Act.

A gift to the solar and wind lobby, Governor Hochul then included a stealth provision in last year's budget dictating the use of a low-ball appraisal process for those same projects, robbing communities of fair property tax revenue for the unwelcomed facilities that they are forced to host.

This year, the assault on rural communities and the environment continues. Tucked into Hochul's budget, the RAPID Act would further extend the over-reaching powers of ORES by empowering the agency to rubber-stamp transmission projects connecting industrial-scale solar and wind to the grid. The Act gives ORES the power of eminent domain, putting landowners at risk of having their property taken, if they were to stand in the way of the Governor's climate agenda. Conservation easements established for the express purpose of preserving nature could be extinguished as well.

But communities are pushing back. Towns across the State have adopted resolutions opposing the Albany backroom budget maneuver. A template resolution for towns was circulated by Stop Energy Sprawl. They include Freedom in Cattaraugus County, Glen in Montgomery County, Rotterdam in Schenectady County, Litchfield in Herkimer County, and Paris in Oneida County. More will follow.

"It's time for the Governor and legislature to realize that upstate communities have rights, too" said Steve Helmin, President of Stop Energy Sprawl, a coalition of community groups, municipalities, and elected officials opposed to the loss of home rule and the devastation of New York's farmland and forests at the hands of wind / solar developers.

"The irony is that we already know how to make carbon-free energy. We have been doing it for years thanks to reliable hydro and nuclear power upstate," said Richfield Springs business owner and former Supervisor Dan Sullivan. "Why should our communities be sacrificed for bad policy driven by downstate politicians who don't understand energy?"

Notably, each one of these assaults on upstate New York have occurred through backroom budget deals rather than as individual bills reviewed during the normal process of legislative review.

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“The Governor and the legislature ought to adopt collaboration and accountability, which the Governor promised when taking office” said Cattaraugus County Legislator Ginger Schroder, “It’s time to restore home rule and let communities decide their own future.”

Stop Energy Sprawl’s template resolution can be found at <https://www.stopenergysprawl.org/s/Resolution-opposing-RAPID-bill.rtf> .

*Stop Energy Sprawl is a coalition of community groups, municipalities, and elected officials from localities in New York State targeted by land-wasting large-scale wind & solar projects located far from where that energy is needed.*