

Cuomo vs. New York

Governor Andrew Cuomo proved again this week that the biggest threat to New York isn't Donald Trump, but progressive anti-growth policies. Witness his administration's permit rejection for a 23-mile natural gas pipeline connecting New York City and Long Island with Pennsylvania shale gas fields.

Beyond creating hundreds of construction jobs, the pipeline would boost development. Low-income housing developers urged the Governor to approve the permit, noting "the uncertainty related to state approvals" is "particularly concerning, since alternative energy options are unavailable or would include costs and design changes that have not been factored into these developing projects." Don't they understand that political uncertainty is a cost of doing business in New York?

The pipeline would also lower carbon emissions since oil is often burned for heating and electricity when demand for gas exceeds supply. No matter. Environmentalists detached

from economic and energy reality claimed the pipeline would hinder development of wind and solar, which make up a mere 5% of state electricity though Mr. Cuomo has set the fantasy renewable target of 50% by 2030.

New York's hostility to natural gas and nuclear power could soon lead to an energy shortage. Mr. Cuomo

has pushed for the Indian Point nuclear plant that provides power to New York City to be decommissioned within the next few years. He has also banned drilling for natural gas in the rich Utica and Marcellus Shale that lie under the state, and he has blocked another natural gas pipeline upstate. Due to pipeline constraints, the utility Con Edison in March suspended natural-gas hookups in Westchester County north of New York City.

The Big Apple and its suburbs lost population last year for the first time in at least a decade, and the Governor's senseless pipeline veto shows why. It's getting harder to afford the illogic of progressive policies.

The Governor cancels another natural gas pipeline.

Rip Van Winkle Lives !

Perhaps the author of the recent Wall Street Journal editorial on Governor Cuomo's clean energy policies fell asleep 10 years ago and woke up on May 16th. That's the day the NY Department of Environmental Conservation announced that the proposed Williams pipeline under New York Harbor poses too much danger to the water resources of a metropolitan area home to 20.3 million people – roughly 1 in every 16 Americans.

The complaints the author came up with in the "Cuomo vs. New York" editorial had a "tired even for 2009" ring to them, but were alarmingly retro coming in 2019.

The author (let's call him or her Rip) accuses Governor Cuomo of having "hostility to ... nuclear power". Yes, the Governor supports closing the aging Indian Point nuclear power plant because it is close to NYC and endangers 20 million people in case of an accident. But the claim of "hostility" lacks credibility after Cuomo, citing climate benefits, pushed through a \$7.6 billion bailout of New York's nuclear plants in 2016, despite stiff opposition from many environmentalists. To say in its wake that the Governor is ready to bring on an "energy shortage" because of his alleged emotional aversion to nuclear power, is downright somnambulant.

Rip laments the loss of construction jobs for the pipeline. Maybe 10 years ago renewable energy jobs were less visible. If asleep, Rip would have missed NYSERDA's 2018 New York Clean Energy Industry Report showing 151,000 clean energy jobs and a growth rate of 3.9% in 2017, double the statewide average for job growth. Yes, we do need to forge a just transition for fossil fuel workers. Ensuring them decent jobs with family supporting wages in the renewable age is a key part of the Climate and Community Protection Act before the Legislature and a strong *raison d'être* for the Governor's Green New Deal. But looking backwards is not a way forward. Just ask coal workers how supporting an obsolete fossil fuel is working out for them. Despite the 45th president's promises, they are still losing jobs.

Rip's drowsiest point was that "alternative options are not available". There is a cleaner, widely used, readily available alternative to heating buildings with fossil fuel. It's called a heat pump. Heat pumps capture the solar warmth in the air, or more efficiently, in the ground. The pump compresses it to raise the temperature, and then distributes it throughout a building. Fossil fuel boilers and furnaces might produce efficiencies of 60-98%. Heat pumps are primarily harvesting renewable energy, and use relatively small amounts of electricity for compression, resulting in efficiencies of 250% to 500%. Not only that, the heat pump cycle can be reversed in the summer to provide ultra-efficient cooling.

Most developed countries have begun a rapid transition to heat pumps, and away from fossil fuels. The European Heat Pump Association notes that "With 11.8 million units installed across Europe, heat pump technology has quickly developed into a corner stone of the European heating mix." showing "...double-digit growth for the 4th year in a row."

Denmark outlawed fossil fuel heating in new builds in 2013. Should the Wall Street Journal really be the last to spot a market trend?

Luckily for New Yorkers, Cuomo's energy agency, NYSERDA, has not been asleep at the wheel. Their reports show that about 1/3rd of New York's greenhouse gases come from heating buildings, and they've been initiating programs to support the market development of heat pumps in replacing fossil fuels. New Yorkers who install heat pumps can save money through lower heating and cooling bills. But NYSERDA has also recognized that even ratepayers without heat pumps benefit, as efficient heat pumps reduce New York's expensive summer electricity peaks and fill in low use winter periods when utility infrastructure is badly underutilized at great cost to ratepayers.

When ConEdison recently declared a gas expansion moratorium in Westchester County, some claimed it was part of a plan to spread panic and rally the masses to support natural gas infrastructure. Thankfully, Governor Cuomo stood firm, and the Public Service Commission and NYSERDA sprang into action, announcing a Clean Energy Action Plan for Westchester. This measured plan was designed to show developers and homeowners that the alternatives, far from being "not available", are actually superior to natural gas. Con Ed has initiated a program for 8,800 residential geothermal heat pump installations by 2025. If initial indications are correct,

Westchester will be leading New York into the renewable age, putting its buildings and businesses in a superior position to compete.

NY-GEO has been meeting with elected Westchester officials and connecting developers with geothermal companies to allow them to complete even larger scale developments seamlessly. The projects currently being negotiated between geothermal firms and developers to provide heating, cooling and hot water for buildings are penciling out at about the same initial cost as the gas version.

They will also cost less to operate, provide greater comfort, require less maintenance, have a far longer expected life, and will produce no on-site emissions. They will be a key factor in helping Governor Cuomo keep his commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 40% by 2030, and 80% by 2050.

Speaking of which, all this is happening while climate change – along with energy efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions - is being taken seriously, to a large degree because of the expensive and life disrupting impact that Hurricane Sandy had on the metropolitan area in 2012. But that must have been about when Rip was hitting the deep phase of the 10-year sleep.

Finally, Rip claims that Governor Cuomo is a bigger threat to New York than Donald Trump. I need a nap before even starting to respond to that one.

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