

Hydropower and New York

Summary of Comments - February 2023

On February 15, 2023, OurEnergyPolicy hosted an expert panel discussion on New York City's energy mix, the new hydropower agreement, and community involvement. Below is a summary of comments made by the speakers, and does not reflect the views of OurEnergyPolicy. Find the recording [here](#).

SPEAKERS



John Mandyck

CEO

Urban Green Council

Moderator



Serge Abergel

Chief Operating Officer

Hydro-Québec



Dale Bryk

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Regional Plan Association



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Issue Scope

- New York's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act established ambitious targets to achieve 70% carbon-free electricity by 2035 and 100% clean electricity by 2040. The state is well underway in accomplishing its interim goals on the path to this clean energy transition.
- New York State leaders know the costs and consequences of inaction far outweigh the costs of investing in large-scale clean energy projects now, so the state continues to move "full steam ahead across the board."

New York's Clean Energy Transition

- Tensions between New York City (NYC), which depends on fossil fuels, and the rest of the state, which deploys more renewable energy sources, make clear the need for a systems view of the energy transition: city and state leaders must work together to drive progress, and one can't do much without support from the other.
- Effective policies set the stage to enable free-market actors to make the most cost-efficient investments to reach climate and clean energy targets.
- New York's Climate Action Council estimates that the work involved in the energy transition will create 200,000 new jobs in New York by 2030 in a variety of energy-related sectors.

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The Champlain Hudson Power Express

- The Champlain-Hudson Power Express (CHPE) hydropower project has been in development for over a decade, came under contract with New York as part of Tier 4 of New York's Clean Energy Standard in 2021, and broke ground in December 2022. The project is scheduled to come online in 2026.
 - This pipeline will channel 1,250 MW from 62 existing hydropower substations in Quebec to NYC via 339 miles of high-voltage direct current (HVDC) cables buried underground or laid in waterways.
 - The CHPE will bring enough renewable energy to power over 1 million homes in Astoria, Queens and this project alone will reduce NYC's overall emissions by 4%.
- The CHPE is an example of true regional collaboration in combatting climate change, as well as cooperation between state and city leaders in New York.
 - Securing buy-in from impacted people throughout the project area required collaboration and direct community engagement: promoting the message that *everyone* benefits when renewable energy projects are completed efficiently
 - In terms of electricity demand, Quebec is a winter-peaking city while NYC peaks in the summer. This two-way transmission line enables seasonal excess energy to flow to where it is needed. As NYC electrifies its grid, this seasonal peak will shift and require a reevaluation of how the pipeline operates; there is a future possibility of enabling bidirectional flow or acting as energy storage as needed.
- Hydro-Québec set out to be a "community-first partner" and considers the CHPE a long-term investment in building relationships and adding value to those impacted, not just a financial transaction that ends when the pipeline is completed.
 - Community involvement was key to the project's development, and the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke became joint owners in 2021.

Considerations for the Future

- The benefits of transitioning to clean energy go far beyond emissions reduction, including improvements in public health, community investment, and new employment opportunities.
 - These new jobs require skilled workers, which necessitates investment in education and workforce development.
- States must share knowledge as part of the ongoing energy transition to accelerate progress and avoid mistakes made in the past by early adopters.
 - Regional collaboration is key to the success of large-scale transmission projects.
- Utilizing a diversity of energy resources enables a reliable, resilient, affordable, and sustainable energy system.
 - Flexible energy resources like the CHPE are important to complement and balance intermittent renewable resources like wind and solar power.