

Comment to NY Draft Scoping Plan

I am extremely proud that people of New York State have stepped up and developed this comprehensive plan. I want to offer my thanks for all of your effort, congratulations on an impressive product and add my own thoughts—specifically my support of a carbon price.

I became a volunteer for Citizens Climate Lobby about 7 years ago after 20 years of disaster responding. I responded to a number of hurricanes such as Katrina, Ivan, Sandy and others, in addition to the odd flood or tornado. I saw the size, scope and frequency of weather related disasters increase over the years. When I spent two weeks at American Red Cross Headquarters to help manage a small part of the response to five different national disasters which were occurring at the same time I decided it was time to look for a way to impact the problem at the cause instead of helping to clean up the damage. I could not see how The US would be able to respond to the massive needs over time.

The findings from IPCC make it abundantly clear that even if we do as much as we can immediately, this problem will worsen before it gets better - and weather-related disasters is only one part of the problem.

I am also an “Ambassador” for the En-ROADS simulator developed by Climate Interactive and MIT Sloan Sustainability Initiative and Ventana Systems. They have compiled data from the best available science to show that unless we enact programs that have quick impacts (as opposed to taking 10-30 years for improvements to be seen) that we are well on the way to a climate that humans will not be able to adapt to, never mind the other species on our planet. Their simulator shows that the fastest way to decreasing carbon in our atmosphere is to put a price on carbon. That would be a necessary and huge first step, although of course not sufficient.

Your plan showed the depth of your understanding of what a carbon price can do. I am in support of starting a carbon price at a reasonable level and gradually increasing it. Border adjustments may be needed with other states, just as a federal carbon price would need a border adjustment with other countries.

Arguments against your efforts such as lost jobs or excessive costs are misrepresentations of the facts. Criticisms of the cost of moving to clean energy ignore the the multiple costs caused by weather change, including disasters. Health costs due to increased heat related illnesses, and particulate air pollution are also ignored, especially in less advantaged populations—as you know.

Families who wish to support clean energy do not have to install solar panels or geothermal systems in order to access clean energy, as community solar/wind programs are becoming increasingly available. In addition, there is plenty of evidence that green power will be a source of more good paying jobs than are available in the fossil fuel industry.

My area of upstate New York is not going to suffer the degree of devastation that is being visited to coastal areas, but even in my area our increasingly unpredictable weather patterns are making it more difficult for our agricultural community.

Regards,
Christine Steerman PhD