

NYSEC-ESEA Media Round-Up
June 2026

OPINION *This piece expresses the views of its author(s), separate from those of this publication.*

Fixing New York's climate accounting is a long-term win | Opinion

3-minute read

Larry O'Connell Special to the USA TODAY Network

April 21, 2023, 10:35 a.m. ET



Will New York climate law changes lower energy costs? What to know

NY Gov. Kathy Hochul plans to weaken the state's climate law, which could affect energy costs

New York's role as a climate leader is undisputed, but true leadership demands the courage to have an honest dialogue about delivering progress in a way that is smarter, more practical and more affordable for every New Yorker.

The fundamental disagreement over how to meet our environmental targets without saddling New York families with excessive costs is a key sticking point that has delayed the state budget. But state leaders cannot allow perfection to stall progress.

Why NY must adjust emission accounting standards

While the devil is in the details, Gov. Kathy Hochul's position that the state should [adjust its greenhouse gas emission accounting standards](#) to simply align with the standards used both by other states and international climate scientists [deserves an honest conversation](#).

Much focus has been placed on the timeline over which the impact of emissions is tracked: 20 years under New York's standards versus 100 years elsewhere. But a second change — to measure so-called lifecycle emissions of fuels used for home heating and vehicles instead of only what comes out of the tailpipe or chimney — could actually have a far greater impact on how New York decarbonizes in the future by incentivizing greater use of renewable fuels derived from sources like used cooking oil and other food waste streams.

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For too long, New York's outlier status has overlooked renewable fuels because under the state's math, the rules ignore the carbon that plants and organic waste soak up while they are growing. By discounting the full lifecycle of these fuels, New York credits them with making only a marginal reduction in emissions.

While the idea is somewhat complicated, the results are clear. Take California, which uses a lifecycle assessment method and an associated Clean Fuel Standard program that has created the nation's pre-eminent market for renewable fuels. Nearly 75% of the state's diesel is now renewable fuel, supplanting traditional fossil fuels that have a significantly higher emissions impact. Closer to home, the city of New York has taken steps to, when counted properly, reduce 162 million pounds of greenhouse gas emissions annually by switching its snowplows, garbage trucks, ferry and other diesel-powered vehicles to renewable fuels. In Westchester, the county of Westchester, Croton-on-Hudson and Tuckahoe are at the forefront using renewable fuel to meet their decarbonization objectives.

Our view: [Climate-law fix will help New Yorkers with affordability](#) | Editorial

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How New York can pragmatically lead

But despite clear evidence of their benefits, New York State's current regulations send a message to fuel producers that they should continue directing their supplies to states like California that properly credit those fuels. That leaves New Yorkers with fewer options at a time when both fossil fuels and utility costs are sky high.

By initiating this difficult but necessary dialogue, Hochul has demonstrated that New York can be an environmental leader while also embracing pragmatic changes that protect the families and businesses that power our state.

It's time to codify these accounting standards that will pave the way for what can come next with policies like a market-based Clean Fuel Standard and ensure that every New Yorker can participate in the green economy.

Larry O'Connell serves as co-president of the Federated Conservationists of Westchester County board of directors.

OPINION

Guest column: Caught in energy transition uncertainty, Hudson Valley can turn to biofuels

Chris Scaturro (Provided)



By GUEST

PUBLISHED: April 5, 2026 at 9:26 AM EDT

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By Chris Scaturro, CEO, Upstate Energy

New York lawmakers are considering significant changes to the state's climate laws as state budget negotiations head into overtime.

But rather than throwing the baby out with the bathwater altogether, the question is how New York State and regions like the Hudson Valley can redirect focus toward realistic climate efforts without losing sight of impactful cleaner energy options.

Biofuels provide the answer. Made from renewable materials like used cooking oil and waste vegetable oils, biofuels are a drop-in alternative to traditional heating oil that can slash emissions by [up to 86%](#) without requiring expensive equipment changes. This immediate, cost-effective reduction offers a practical path forward that rigid mandates simply cannot provide.

Part of the sharp bipartisan pivot toward more pragmatic — but effective — climate policy was the revelation that households in upstate New York will be saddled with [thousands of dollars in additional costs](#) under current mandates.

At a time when inflationary and economic pressures are [hurting](#) Hudson Valley residents while local budgetary pressures are [increasing](#), these costs are a non-starter.

Financial relief, however, does not have to come at the expense of environmental progress. While the state's pending budget decisions may finally offer us breathing room to regain our financial footing, we are not retreating from clean energy.

Biofuels allow thousands of Hudson Valley homes to continue relying on their familiar, dependable heating systems while lowering emissions at the same time. Rather than waiting for full-scale electrification to happen, integrating cleaner fuels into existing heating oil supply and delivery networks to meet customers where they are in their clean energy journey is the next step for our region.

Practice has already proven the merit of this approach. New York state recognized the value of biofuels when it first implemented a [requirement](#) for 10% biodiesel blend in all heating oil, increasing to 20% by 2030. That means that New York homes, at a minimum, already have biofuels blended into their existing heating system, benefiting nearly 1.4 million homes that currently consume heating fuel.

The same technology heating our living rooms also is proving its worth in New York's toughest to decarbonize transportation sectors.

New York City's conversion of its [heavy-duty trucks and ferries](#) to use entirely renewable diesel is proof that we don't need to wait for a far-off solution to reduce emissions without disrupting services. [Erie](#) and [Westchester](#) counties have also launched pilot projects, with Westchester's program now fully [implemented](#). Kingston has also [pursued a transition](#).

State policy can help carry this momentum forward, including changes being debated to reasonably amend [how renewable fuel emissions are counted](#) to align with international scientific standards, as well as the replication of programs like the wildly successful clean fuel standard California has used to slash emissions.

This shift from rigid mandates to smart incentives ensures that regions like ours aren't left behind. In the Hudson Valley, like other regions of New York, one-size-fits-all doesn't help anybody when local needs are unique. Now, our region can lead by demonstrating how an all-of-the-above energy mix lowers emissions in ways that actually work for New Yorkers.

Biofuels offer a grounded, scalable piece of this strategy. We must leverage the tools already at our disposal, tools that deliver sustainability without sacrificing affordability.

Chris Scaturro is the owner and CEO of Upstate Energy based in Modena.

The Freeman welcomes guest opinion columns for this space from public officials and public interest groups about a single news topic. Submissions should be emailed to letters@freemanonline.com and should be between 350 and 750 words. The Freeman reserves the right to reject submissions.



Home » News » Op-Ed: The Suffolk Need for Multiple Clean Energy Sources



Op-Ed: The Suffolk Need for Multiple Clean Energy Sources

March 26, 2025, 5:40 am | News | Comment | Leave a comment

Residents and business owners in Huntington and across Long Island [deserve](#) that diversifying our energy system is a matter of both environmental and economic necessity. With our aging power grid under [increasing strain](#), expanding our energy assets is essential to ensuring reliability and affordability in an era of rising costs. [Read the full commentary here.](#)

However, a truly resilient strategy must look beyond wind, natural gas, and nuclear. Renewable liquid fuels – or “biofuels” – provide a critical, immediate solution for both Long Island and the state at large.

While New York state continues to push toward electric building heating and vehicles, the island simply is not built for rapid electrification all at once. New electric generators are still under development and have been constrained by [federal roadblocks](#) in many of the projects meant to bring new energy directly to Long Islanders. At the same time, other forms of energy, like battery storage proposals, have triggered intense [local opposition](#). It's also not simply that the island's electric infrastructure needs an overhaul, but the cost of new home systems and vehicles remains prohibitive for too many people.

Meeting the moment of reliability and affordability challenges requires meeting people where they are with their energy needs. A significant number of Long Island homes continue to rely on oil heat, just as the island's transportation and heavy-duty truck and equipment fleets rely on diesel fuel. Helping grow the supply of “drop-in” replacements for those fuels is essential to alleviating strain on the region's energy grid while also preserving existing systems and vehicles for those who can't afford tens of thousands of dollars in upgrade costs.

New York State already [provides](#) a 10 percent biodiesel blend in heating oil statewide, with some providers on the island, including those serving Huntington, going further to offer higher blends or full all-renewable fuel options. Meanwhile, New York City has converted its entire diesel truck fleet and its ferries to use renewable diesel, a decision that alone prevents approximately [32 million pounds](#) of emissions annually.

It is time to go further. Proposed legislation to expand biofuel systems and establish a Clean Fuel Standard would unlock an energy supply we can use right now, rather than waiting for distant, perfect solutions. This is especially vital for Suffolk's aging housing stock, which still relies on heating oil to survive the [harsh winters](#) and storm-related outages Long Island knows all too well. While full electrification remains the long-term goal, the immediate costs and infrastructure gaps make it currently unsustainable for many of our families and firms. [Read the full commentary here.](#)

The Town of Huntington is uniquely positioned to bridge this gap. As the only Suffolk municipality that owns and operates its own public transit system – Huntington Area Rapid Transit (HART) – we have already begun [utilizing](#) cleaner fuels. Because Huntington controls its own fleet decisions, we can immediately expand the use of biofuels. [Explore emissions for us in 2023](#), without straining the electric grid or the municipal budget.

Not only is full electrification currently infeasible for the grid, but making the switch would be [financially prohibitive](#) for many of our working-class families and [particularly](#) senior population. Biofuels allow homeowners and fleet operators to lower their carbon intensity without worsening the affordability pressures our residents are much accustomed to.

Ultimately, Suffolk County doesn't have the luxury of waiting for a perfect energy grid that is still years away. By pioneering the expansion of biofuels for our municipal fleets and home heating, we can achieve immediate, drastic emissions reductions without abandoning the working-class families and seniors who call this island home.

It is time for Suffolk to lead the way in proving that a cleaner environment doesn't have to come at the cost of a cold home or a strained budget.

Rocco J. Lacortese is the CEO of the New York State Energy Coalition.

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OPINION

Biofuels a ‘right-now’ solution to New York’s energy needs (Your Letters)

Published: Feb. 17, 2026, 10:49 a.m.



In this photo from 2022, A Staten Island-bound NYC Ferry makes its way to the St. George Terminal. (Advance/SILive.com | Jason Paderon)



By [Your Letters](#)

To the Editor:

If 2026 is the year of affordability, energy cost is the most important driving force. Consumers rightfully want to know that the energy they need will be there when they need it, without costing an arm and a leg.



To achieve that, state leaders have arrived at a bipartisan consensus that a singular focus on policies like renewable electrification as a one-shot solution will drain wallets. “All-of-the-above” has grown to be more than a buzz phrase; it’s ingrained in state energy policy.

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Nowhere is that more evident than Gov. Kathy Hochul’s all-in approach to nuclear energy, announcing in January her intent to quadruple the state’s nuclear commitment to include enough new development to power millions of homes. Put another way, New York intends to build more than the total amount of nuclear construction nationwide over the last three decades.

The rub is that nuclear facilities are expensive and can take well more than a decade to build. So while we work toward laudable goals to build new nuclear energy as quickly as possible, we need other strategies right now to alleviate an impending energy crunch that threatens reliability and drives up the costs for limited resources.

Renewable biofuels need to be part of the here-and-now mix, especially in hard and costly to electrify sectors. Made from sources like restaurant grease, animal fats and used cooking oil — and with significantly lower emissions than traditional fuels — these fuels are a readymade solution to help alleviate demand for other energy today and without the need for potentially cost-prohibitive home heating system or vehicle upgrades.

New York City's conversion of its heavy-duty trucks and ferries to use entirely renewable diesel is a shining example that we don't need to wait for a silver-bullet solution like nuclear paired with millions spent on electric vehicles in order to reduce emissions without disrupting services New Yorkers rely on. Erie and Westchester counties have gotten on board, too. And the state has highlighted supplanting fossil fuels with renewable ones as a step toward achieving climate and energy goals.

Data from the California Air Resources Board show that aggressive policies have helped the state replace 75% of the fossil diesel used in heavy duty vehicles with renewable and biodiesel alternatives.

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As New York policymakers pursue nuclear, they also should take a hard look at proposals like a Clean Fuel Standard, similar to policies in California, that would signal to the market that the Empire State is going beyond pilot or one-off projects and is open for widespread renewable fuel use and production. Similarly, ensuring that renewable diesel and biodiesel are both options under the state's bioheating law will help further move away from traditional oil used by homeowners but without the added upfront costs of installing fully electric systems.

These and other measures will strengthen energy reliability, mitigate household costs, and accelerate our clean energy transition without overtaxing the electric grid.

Hochul is right to pivot to a more practical energy future, but we cannot afford to let the perfect of tomorrow get in the way of the proven of today. By embracing renewable biofuels as a cornerstone of our strategy, we can cut emissions, protect our wallets, and power our state with a solution that is ready right now.

Kris DeLair

Executive Director

Empire State Energy Association

Troy

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CEO

New York State Energy Coalition

Hauppauge, Long Island

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EMPIRE REPORT

Record-smashing cold snap proves why New York still needs renewable biofuels

By **Kris DeLair and Rocco J. Lacertosa** | February 6, 2026

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The historic run of bitter cold and record-shattering snow drifts across the state has prompted a moment of reckoning when it comes to New York’s energy conversation. When the Arctic air settles and the snow piles up, all-renewable electrification simply isn’t well-positioned to step up to the plate. An all-of-the-above approach is necessary to provide New Yorkers with reliable heat and power in these types of scenarios.

During these hours of intense energy stress, it wasn’t slow-moving all-electric promises that kept us warm — it was the liquid heating fuels industry which served

as an essential backstop that prevented the extreme weather from becoming a catastrophe.

Dual-fuel generation consistently accounted for over one-third of the state's energy usage during the late-January deep freeze, according to the New York Independent System Operator (NYISO), as electric generators competed with building owners for available natural gas. Renewables struggled to crack 5 percent, a stark contrast that revealed a critical vulnerability in the state's strategy to decarbonize the grid.

Meanwhile, the federal government waived certain requirements to allow all power generators to run at maximum capacity, the kind of need that would likely arise more frequently in the years ahead if our electric system becomes "winter peaking" and demand doubles amid the state's plans to move more New Yorkers to electric heat pumps and vehicles.

However, the role of liquid fuels extends beyond just large-scale power generation and is equally vital to keeping homes and businesses warm.

While the broader industry worked to ensure the reliability of the grid, our everyday local suppliers kicked their efforts into overdrive to deliver renewable biofuels. By blending these low-carbon fuels into traditional supplies, they provided a critical backstop for homes and business owners who, even in cases when they rely on traditional boilers as a back-up to electric or gas systems, needed additional resources to keep warm.

There was no better case made for the all-of-the-above energy approach than in these past few weeks (and with more cold blowing in); nor was there a better case for including here-and-now solutions in that mix.

Ignoring the true potential of practical tools available to reduce emissions today like biofuels, risks a scenario where our energy system becomes overtaxed, under-resourced, and prone to failure exactly when New Yorkers are most vulnerable — and when they can quite literally least afford higher costs because their energy choices are limited.

The reality is that renewable biofuels are New York's backbone on these coldest days. We are delivering a cleaner product today by utilizing advanced renewable feedstocks — like restaurant grease, animal fats, and waste vegetable oil — that slash emissions without requiring homeowners to rip out and replace their existing heating systems. That delivers the best-of-both-worlds solution the state is seeking right now, lowering emissions while protecting against expensive capital costs for those who can't afford them.

The renewable liquid fuels industry is constantly evolving and can and will continue to improve so that for decades to come, we remain a pillar of the state's energy system. However, we cannot sustain this progress alone.

The state should pursue policies that would continue to increase the blending of renewable fuels, and to expand the blending requirements to include both renewable diesel and biodiesel under the state's bioheating law. This will expand the marketplace for renewables and accelerate the transition away from traditional heating oil, giving homeowners multiple clean-energy pathways without requiring prohibitive upfront system replacement costs.

These common-sense measures will support energy demand — especially at times of peak need — bolstering grid reliability, helping keep household costs lower, and continuing progress toward climate goals. While resources like nuclear that would support increased electrification are important components of the long-term conversation, they do not change the immediate reality that New York needs proven solutions to survive the winter.

By embracing and incentivizing renewable biofuel adoption, we can help ensure New Yorkers don't have to think twice about the one thing they should rightly expect in the dead of winter: a warm home.

*Kris DeLair is Executive Director of the Empire State Energy Association, Inc.,
Rocco J. Lacertosa is CEO of the New York State Energy Coalition, Inc.*

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OPINION *This piece expresses the views of its author(s), separate from those of this publication.*

NY's economy's need reliable energy — including biofuels | Opinion

3-minute read

John Ravitz Special to the USA TODAY Network

Updated Jan. 20, 2026, 10:06 a.m. ET

The conversation about energy in New York has thankfully reached a moment of pragmatic reckoning. A bipartisan consensus is emerging among Gov. Kathy Hochul and state lawmakers that they must broaden the state's climate strategy because relying exclusively on electrification, which is increasingly hampered by the federal administration's attacks on the renewable energy sector, is no longer feasible.

A pragmatic, all-of-the-above energy strategy that shores up reliability and helps manage soaring costs doesn't only use the well-known tools at our disposal; it must also encourage adoption of emerging resources. That includes using biofuels, a diesel replacement made from sources like used cooking oil, recycled restaurant grease, animal fats and other waste streams that can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 86%.

Biofuels prove their value to New York

Biofuels are already proving their value here in Westchester, where the County Airport and Croton-on-Hudson are using them to reduce their carbon footprints. The Port Authority has adopted renewable diesel, as has New York City for its emergency and heavy-duty fleets, preventing more than 162 million pounds of carbon emissions annually. And the new State Energy Plan approved in December makes clear that these low-carbon fuels are an important complement to the overall state energy strategy.

These fuels are a fully compatible, plug-and-play solution for existing infrastructure — not just in transportation fleets, but also in building heat systems. This compatibility is critical, mitigating costly fleet or building-heat system modifications.

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Biofuel demonstrates real promise of helping businesses reduce emissions without the worry that comes with going all-electric. There could not be clearer warnings that electric demand will nearly double over the next two decades without the generation in place for electric supply to keep up. That risks not just preventing our existing business community from making a clean energy switch, it also serves to prevent companies from pursuing New York as a viable place to set up new operations.

We need all-of-the-above solutions at a time when 72% of businesses statewide, including many here in Westchester, recently said in a state Business Council survey that current economic conditions are unfavorable. The consensus was that New York must make immediate improvements around population loss and the high cost of doing business, while mitigating worrisome energy policies.

Advancing policies that make biofuels more accessible is a common-sense solution. The State Energy Plan acknowledges this by outlining that policy should not stifle deployment, noting that new “mandates, market-based mechanisms, and incentives” would be needed to ensure adequate supply of low-carbon fuels.

Ultimately, expanding the use of biofuels can be a powerful economic catalyst. Their deployment not only cuts carbon emissions but also fuels job creation and spurs innovation across key sectors, from domestic agriculture and local fuel distribution to transportation and advanced clean-tech innovation.

When lawmakers return to Albany, they should prioritize policies like a low-carbon fuel standard that would help expand availability of biofuels by signaling to producers that New York is fully open for business. A similar program in California is currently driving the bulk of the biofuel supply to the West Coast, dramatically reducing emissions there.

Opinion: [New York's energy policy undermines our economic development](#)

NY can't turn its back on clean energy options

Westchester County — and New York as a whole — can't afford to turn its back on a full suite of clean energy options at a time when our region is facing rising energy costs and an intensifying climate crisis. What's more, failing to shore up our energy supply at a time when

our region and state is poised for transformational economic growth — from revitalizing our downtowns to investing billions in the biotech and semiconductor sectors — only jeopardizes our ability to tackle the affordability challenges New Yorkers face.

Embracing biofuels as part of an all-of-the-above energy strategy is forward-looking leadership that represents progress over paralysis. We don't have to choose between economic development and environmental responsibility. We can, and must, achieve both.

John Ravitz serves as the executive vice president and COO of the Business Council of Westchester.



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Op-Ed | NY needs affordable, 'right now' solutions for energy future

By Allison Heaney

Posted on January 5, 2026



Photo by Allison Heaney

In the quiet residential blocks of Queens, from **College Point** to **Rosedale**, the rising cost of living



At the same time, a wave of energy mandates threatens to further impact New Yorkers anxious about the financial consequences.

While the long-term goal of a greener New York is one we all share, we cannot afford to pursue policies that will drive up costs at the expense of our families' financial survival or the **reliability of our power grid**.

Fortunately, we are seeing a welcome shift toward reality in our leadership and away from tunnel vision toward electrification.

A more moderate “all-of-the-above” energy stance, including the decision to delay implementation of the state’s All-Electric Buildings Act, is long overdue. Energy diversity that creates more options for New Yorkers is the most common-sense way to achieve affordability and reliability. Now with policymakers returning to Albany to start the new year,

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Among the most pragmatic, immediate, and cost-effective paths forward to meet the state's climate goals is the use of biofuels for both building heat and transportation. Made from resources like cooking grease, rendered animal fat, and soybean byproducts, biofuels' lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions are **up to 86 percent lower** than those of petroleum diesel.

The push for electrification as the only viable climate solution often ignores a simple financial truth: Many New York homeowners cannot afford to spend **thousands of dollars** to rip out their existing heating systems for heat pumps, nor can heavy-duty vehicle operators like trucking companies and

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same time. In contrast, biofuels are a drop-in solution, meaning they can be used in existing systems and fuel tanks today without the potentially expensive price tag associated with electric upgrades coupled with rising utility costs.



It's also an option that doesn't burden the statewide energy grid's thinning reliability margins, which could **cause blackouts** in New York City and Long Island as early as next year.

This isn't a future solution that is unproven at scale. The state already is requiring that biofuels increasingly be used to replace fossil heating oil, with many distributors delivering blends of heating fuel that utilize biofuels well beyond the amounts mandated by the state.



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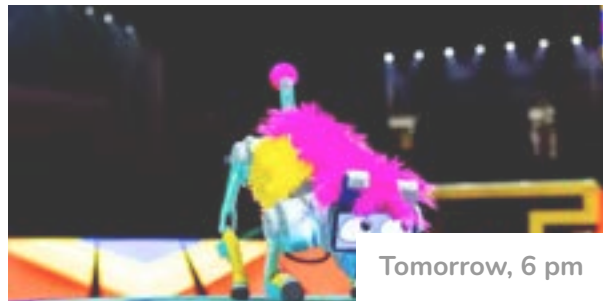
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New York City in particular is leading by example. The city has **converted** its entire heavy-duty vehicle fleet to what's known as renewable diesel and is currently transitioning the Staten Island Ferry. By next summer, all city trucks and vessels **will be running** on this clean fuel source.



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Kids of Queens: Making streetwear that empowers kids and gives back



The issue is that biofuel supply must continue to increase if more homeowners and municipalities are going to transition from fossil diesel to greater amounts of biofuels. As lawmakers begin their new legislative session, taking up policies like a clean fuel standard would spur practical momentum towards state climate goals, as would policies that allow both biodiesel and renewable diesel to be used for building heat.

Ultimately, we don't have to choose between environmental progress today and protecting the pockets of the working-class families who make this city run. For the sake of our neighbors across the city and state, let's choose a path that is green, reliable, and — most importantly — affordable.



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Allison Heaney.

Photo courtesy of Allison Heaney

Allison Heaney is the president of the Colleege Point-based Skaggs-Walsh, a third-generation family-owned business and division of the Energy Conservation Group.

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GUEST COLUMN: Clean heat has more than one solution

By Heather Canetto

Dec 8, 2025




New York's recent approach to reducing emissions has been guided by a singular focus on electrification.

A wave of mandates has our customers anxious about the financial consequences and has resulted in increasingly serious warnings from the state's grid operator about the added strain.

With the state's recent decision to delay the All-Electric Buildings Act, policymakers should now pivot towards a more sensible approach, recognizing the practical and financial realities facing New Yorkers, especially here in the Hudson Valley.

Leaders in our area are already recognizing that an all-electric transition simply isn't feasible for everyone right now.



To be clear, aspirational goals for climate action are commendable and deserve support. But tying the entire state to a single energy source amid so much uncertainty, particularly from an affordability and reliability standpoint, has made us all lose sight of the purpose of the clean energy transition.

What we need right now is a more balanced, practical path forward for energy in New York, especially to support our communities that are grappling with the cost-of-living concerns.

Energy choice allows homeowners and business owners the choice of heat pump technology, propane, natural gas, biofuel or a combination of all of the above.

As an example, immediately available to residential and commercial buildings is the option that New York has been embracing and expanding successfully for years: biofuels.

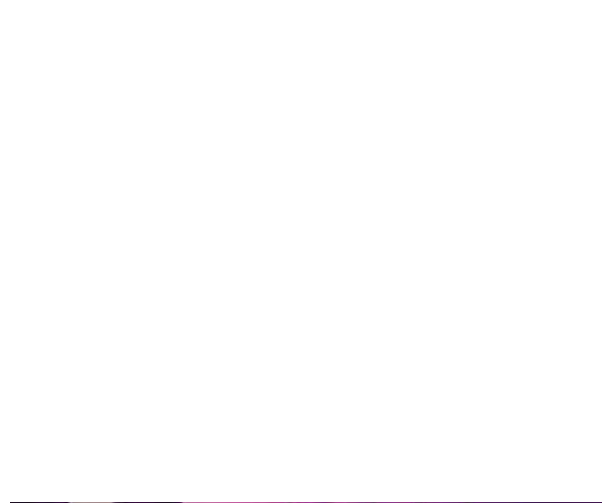
Made from renewable sources such as vegetable oils, animal fats and used cooking grease, New York's residential and commercial heating sector can utilize biofuels to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 86 percent.

As a drop-in replacement fuel, biofuels work seamlessly in current home heating appliances.

It's an option that doesn't burden the grid's thinning reliability margins or households with the costs of converting to alternate heating systems.

Moreover, unlike current electrification infrastructure challenges, biofuel production and supply can effectively meet demand of the heating sector as needed.

Biofuel is an energy source that is already being used across the state, with a 10 percent biodiesel blend requirement in heating fuel, which will increase to 20 percent in 2030.



The state also offers a tax credit to incentivize biofuel use in home heating.

Heating fuel distributors across the state are beginning to supply blends at higher levels, even up to a full 100 percent biofuel option.

The state should incentivize further steps forward.

Commonsense state legislation like a clean fuel standard would spur practical momentum towards state climate goals, with reliable and affordable solutions.

An all-of-the-above energy strategy, with biofuels in the mix, is the only responsible way forward.

...

Heather Canetto is the owner of Herrington Fuels Inc. in Hillsdale, Columbia County.

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Letter: Biofuels a green solution that run on reality — not ideology

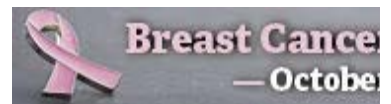
By ED LOCKWOOD, Adirondack Energy

Dec 18, 2025 Updated 22 mins ago 0



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Here in the Adirondack foothills, conservation is more than a talking point. Nature is our way of life, and living within this unique landscape requires pragmatism, not ideology.

Our commitment to the environment is absolute, but our experience with harsh winters and sparse infrastructure teaches us that reliability is key to sustainable life in the North Country.

When the winter wind screams off the mountains, the need for reliable heat is absolute.

Serving as both the chairman of the Franklin County Legislature and as the director of a regional home heating oil company gives me a unique perspective: Our neighbors — from small mom-and-pop operations to the trucking fleets that deliver vital goods — rely on liquid fuels to keep moving and stay warm.

Now, at a time when renewable energy projects are faltering, and New York’s energy grid faces mounting pressures, we need a practical, all-of-the-above energy approach that prioritizes reliability and affordability.

The strategy must include biofuels, biodegradable fuels created from agricultural products and recycled resources, including vegetable oils, animal fats, and used cooking grease. With up to 86% lower lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions than petroleum diesel, these clean fuels are an accessible energy source that can help the state advance its climate goals.

At a time when every New Yorker is concerned about affordability, biofuels also are ready for use in existing home heating systems and fuel tanks without the increased cost burden of retrofits or new system installations. That makes them a compelling solution for immediately reducing emissions without breaking the bank.

The good news is the draft State Energy Plan, which is currently undergoing an update for the first time in a half-decade, calls biofuels “an important complement” to electrification in the state’s clean energy transition strategy. This as the state is also incentivizing municipalities to use renewable diesel for their vehicle fleets, becoming the first state in the Northeast to offer the fuel to schools, non-profits, and counties like ours.



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Lawmakers must build on these efforts, including by adopting a low-carbon fuel standard, which would help create the sustained market demand necessary to attract capital and justify building in-state biofuel processing infrastructure. These efforts would be aided by updating the state’s bioheating law to allow renewable diesel — not just the similar but differently produced biodiesel — to qualify as a replacement for fossil heating oil. This would help not just meet current requirements that all heating oil be at least 10% biofuel, it would help make fuel available to introduce higher blends.

Policies like these would fit well within the pragmatic shift that’s occurring in Albany. Gov. Hochul’s recent decision to pause the All-Electric Buildings Act that would have banned fossil fuels in most new housing construction starting next year was a positive first step. Now, New York needs to push forward on our long-term emissions and cleaner energy goals without neglecting the immediate, practical tools at our disposal. Simply waiting for electric vehicles and heating infrastructure to become affordable and more widespread isn’t a solution.

Renewable biofuels are ready today to keep homes warm and businesses running reliably as we continue to build our clean energy future. Let’s keep up the momentum toward an energy policy that works for everyone, not just one side of the debate.

— Ed Lockwood

Ed Lockwood is the chairman of the Franklin County Legislature and the director of operations at Adirondack Energy.

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Will Gov. Kathy Hochul ask what greener resources will help maintain affordability while working toward environmental goals? Credit: Jeff Bachner

By Newsday Readers

letters@newsday.com

March 18, 2026 5:00 am

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The question “Who wins the green energy vs. affordability clash?” is the wrong one to ask [“Green energy vs. affordability,” Editorial, March 15]. Instead, Gov. Kathy Hochul and state lawmakers must ask what greener

resources will help us maintain affordability while making progress toward environmental goals. The answer is being overlooked: renewable biofuels — lower-emission heating oil and diesel alternatives made from sources like used cooking oil.

Biofuels are “drop-in” alternatives that work with existing boilers and furnaces or diesel trucks. That is critical when the upfront costs of replacing existing building heat systems and vehicles with all-electric alternatives are out of reach for many families and small businesses, especially if they’ll be forced to pay yearly premiums that the state recently calculated New Yorkers will face under impending mandates.

The editorial board proposes adjustments to state law for legislators to consider. The state must also ensure that life-cycle emissions of biofuels are calculated properly, as California has calculated them, spurring a renewable fuels market that has dramatically reduced emissions.

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Adapting to cost challenges without losing sight of the greater goals, as the editorial put it, means embracing all options on the table, rather than overlooking what’s right in front of us.

— **Rocco J. Lacertosa, Hauppauge**

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The writer is CEO of the New York State Energy Coalition.

There is no clash between green energy and affordability except the one that gas lobbyists seem to be trying to convince Kathy Hochul of.

After several years of stalling on the climate mandate, especially the provision that would send energy bill rebates to consumers while investing in

more green energy, Hochul has changed the rules to declare the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act unaffordable. Hochul has even had the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority produce a memo with questionable accounting standards to “prove” it.

What should be blatantly apparent to Hochul and the rest of our elected leaders is that our sky-high energy bills are not paying for the climate mandate. They are paying for the ever-increasing price of natural gas, the global spike in heating oil prices because of our war on Iran, and building out more gas and grid infrastructure.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Low-carbon fuels offer an affordable emissions solution

Gregory O'Connor, Albany

We all agree that New York needs energy solutions that affordably cut emissions, as argued in the commentary "Renewable natural gas will help New York meet its energy goals" (Feb. 6). Calls to enact a Clean Fuel Standard and other policies that drive adoption of alternative fuels are an important step forward that lawmakers must consider this legislative session.

Low-carbon liquid fuels (biofuels) are part of a responsible "all of the above" energy policy, one that recognizes we need every practical tool available to lower emissions while maintaining reliability and affordability.

These fuels are reducing carbon emissions today, not decades from now, and the current success of biofuels in New York City's emergency vehicles, trucks, and ferries, and in home fuel tanks statewide, offers a window into what's possible under the right policy. Biofuels like renewable diesel and biodiesel, made from sources like used cooking oil and restaurant grease, can reduce emissions by up to 86% compared with traditional diesel. Because they are drop-in fuels, they work in existing engines and equipment. For New Yorkers who can't afford costly new electric vehicles and home heating systems, they provide a cost-effective path to reducing carbon footprints.

With lawmakers focusing on affordability and energy, advancing clean fuels is an easy win that New Yorkers will see on their roads and in their homes.

We look forward to supporting a balanced and practical approach to reducing New York's carbon emissions and endorse the inclusion of biofuels as a key component of the strategy.

The writer is President of Main-Care Energy.

Published March 2, 2026

https://www.27east.com/east-hampton-press/opinion/letters/article_11ff87db-bc97-4f7e-8b54-ec4f920e7d2f.html

Dam Is Breaking

Dec 15, 2025

The East End is no stranger to the intensifying effects of climate change. Yet New York's clean energy transition has hit a brick wall. The path to meeting the state's climate targets has been blocked by economic headwinds, permitting bottlenecks and shifting federal priorities toward renewable energy.

Governor Kathy Hochul has acknowledged the mounting challenges and has smartly embraced a pragmatic "all of the above" energy approach, prioritizing affordability and reliability over ideology.

The governor has described recent warnings from the New York Independent System Operator about potential Long Island blackouts as early as next summer as "chilling," and her administration has appealed a court order requiring the state to design regulations for a strict "cap and invest" emissions pricing program, because affordability and reliability concerns rightly should take precedence right now.

This principle is what spurred a recent bipartisan agreement in Albany, leading a significant number of Democrats to align with Republicans to successfully convince the state to re-evaluate the scheduled all-electric building mandate.

The dam is starting to break, and the impending reliability crisis has forced a critical, pragmatic reckoning among state leaders. The time for an exclusively narrow, single-minded focus on electrification and renewables is over.

Through all of this, we shouldn't mistake pragmatism for lack of progress. The state has the capability to reduce emissions and de-carbonize heating and transportation systems right now through biofuels, which deserve a fresh look. Made from cooking grease, rendered animal fat and soybean byproducts, biofuels can be used in existing

vehicles and home heating systems without the need for costly upgrades. These products have significantly lower lifecycle emissions — up to 86 percent less — than traditional fossil fuels.

This renewable resource can also support the electric grid by mitigating demand, diversifying the energy sector and increasing reliability, serving as a critical buffer to counter strains on the grid, such as peak demand periods and weather-related incidences.

Several townships are already thinking ahead. Southampton Town, for example, has adopted a climate plan that calls for a new policy requiring all new town-owned vehicles be electric or alternative fuel-based.

Meanwhile, East Hampton Town has resolved to replace internal combustion vehicles with electric vehicles. But amid challenges facing the market that are likely to drive up costs, East Hampton and other localities should instead consider tapping into renewable diesel for their fleets, which the state is making available to state agencies, authorities, schools, nonprofits and municipalities across 26 counties, including Suffolk County.

We can't afford to waste time. Delaying the adoption of biofuels' immediate carbon benefits over endless debate is a preventable setback that will only increase the difficulty and cost of our increasingly delicate climate efforts.

Rocco J. Lacertosa

Chief Executive Officer

New York State Energy Coalition Inc.

Hauppauge

First, Montessori emphasized the importance of “the utilization of the inner powers of the child for his own instruction.” But this cannot happen in isolation. Lev Vygotsky underscored the need for “scaffolding” provided by teachers or more knowledgeable peers. Schenectady native Pat Riley, for example, honed his basketball skills by playing with his older brother and friends — a clear illustration of Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development, in which learning and growth occur through social interaction, play and imagination.

Second, Montessori warned that educators must not become obstacles to a child’s development. Knowing what to teach is not especially difficult, she argued; recognizing and discarding our own assumptions and prejudices is far harder.

Schools and parents too often blame one another. Poor communication plays a role, but the problem is more complex. We need more volunteers, better training and greater resources. Moderation may be a virtue in some contexts, but not here. As Branch Rickey famously said, “A moderate is a moral pickpocket” — a sentiment that resonates when confronting racial discrimination and ensuring inclusion for all children in our schools.

Published Dec. 29, 2025

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Biofuels belong in New York’s clean energy plan

Kris DeLair, Troy

Aggressive electrification mandates continue to drive up costs for consumers, as noted in [“New York’s Climate Act mandates in question”](#) (Dec. 1), and also threaten to strain an already overburdened electric grid — one that the state’s grid operator has warned could face reliability challenges by the mid-2030s.

Electrification has a role in the energy transition, but New York can no longer sideline one of the most effective tools for cutting emissions: biofuels. These domestically produced, drop-in fuels are made from vegetable oils, animal fats and recycled grease. They work in existing home heating systems and heavy-duty vehicles, offering an affordable way to reduce emissions without costly equipment conversions or additional strain on the grid.

Their climate benefits are substantial. Biodiesel and renewable diesel can significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions compared with petroleum diesel, helping lower carbon intensity immediately.

Biofuels are already proving their value. New York City uses renewable diesel for emergency and heavy-duty fleets, preventing millions of pounds of carbon emissions each year. Erie County’s renewable diesel pilot is expected to cut millions more, and Westchester County Airport and Croton-on-Hudson are also using biofuels to shrink their carbon footprints.

To build on this progress, New York should adopt a clean fuel standard to incentivize alternative fuels and attract investment. A cleaner, more affordable energy future will require using all the tools available — not just one.

The writer is with the Empire State Energy Association.

Published Dec. 29, 2025

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Climate leadership means planning beyond the next election

Elizabeth Poreba, New Lebanon

Two headlines in the Dec. 4 edition — “Trump seeks to weaken mileage rules” and [“N.Y. schools and campuses need clean-energy investment”](#) — illustrate a stark divide in how leaders approach the climate crisis.

President Donald Trump’s attitude might best be summed up by the trendy phrase “you only live once.” If short-term costs are all that matter, weakening emissions standards may seem appealing because it could make new cars cheaper. Never mind that more gas-powered vehicles would drive higher fuel costs and worsen climate disruption over time.

The proposed Carbon Free and Healthy Schools Bond Act offers a very different approach. While it may not deliver immediate payoffs, modernizing school buildings and investing in solar energy — rather than continually patching failing infrastructure — would yield long-term energy savings and significant benefits to public health and student well-being.

This is not a debate between fiscally prudent realists and spendthrift dreamers. It is a choice between short-sighted and responsible leadership. Trump favors immediate gratification, regardless of long-term consequences. Melinda Person of New York State United Teachers, by contrast, argues for investing now to create durable future benefits.

Gov. Kathy Hochul now faces a defining choice. Will she uphold the mandates of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act and continue reducing emissions, or will she retreat from its goals under the misleading banner of “affordability”?

Published Dec. 29, 2025

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Kids & Education

Bronx teens gain hands-on trades experience at Bronx Design and Construction Academy



By Emily Swanson

Posted on May 5, 2026



José Germosen and Ryan Nunez are both juniors studying HVAC at Bronx Design and Construction Academy.

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Photo by Emily Swanson

At [Bronx Design and Construction Academy](#) in the South Bronx, high school students are preparing to step straight into high-paying careers in carpentry, plumbing, heating/cooling and other in-demand fields.

The Alfred E. Smith campus, which also houses an automotive program, has the same desks and whiteboards as in any school. But students spend their class time pounding hammers, designing plans with drafting software, running pipes and taking apart boilers, culminating in an all-school final project: a fully functioning tiny house inside the carpentry lab.



Students in architecture, carpentry, plumbing, electrical and HVAC planned and built a functioning house inside the school's massive carpentry lab.

Photo by Emily Swanson

When these students graduate, they'll find an industry just waiting to absorb them as it seeks to replace an aging workforce.



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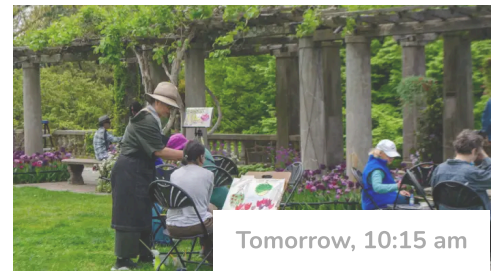
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HVAC and electrician careers are expected to grow much faster than average, with expected job openings increasing 8% and 9% by 2034, according to the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#). The job outlook for plumbers and pipefitters is also strong at 4% growth.

During a visit to the school, co-founder Jeffrey Smalls told the Bronx Times that within 2 to 3 years of graduating, Bronx Design and Construction Academy alumni can make more than \$100,000 working for major companies like Con Edison and Verizon or local businesses.

But despite its track record of student success, the school has only about 200 students, with capacity for about 500 more, Smalls said.

He said while low enrollment is becoming “a serious concern,” he’s confident that if more young people knew about the school and strong workforce demand, every seat would be filled.

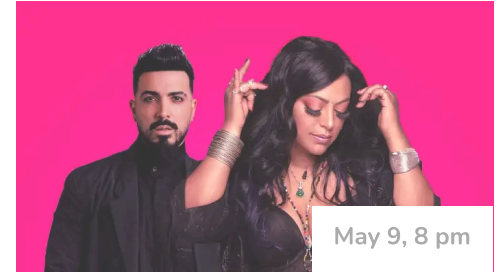
“The industry has a need for people who are mechanically inclined and wanting to get into the construction industry,” he said.

Putting teens to work



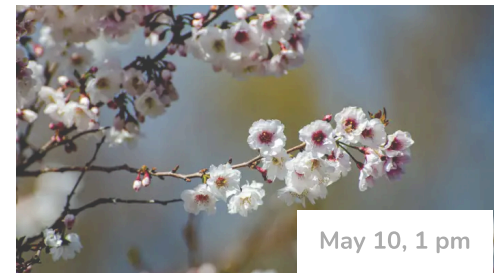
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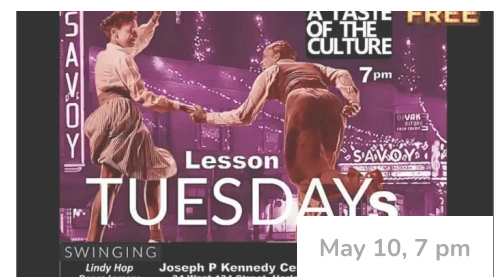
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May 14, 5 pm



Students practice wiring in the electrical classroom.

Photo by Emily Swanson

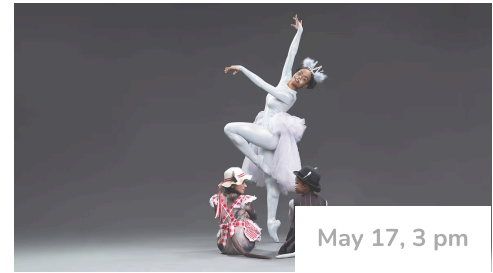
José Germosen and Ryan Nunez, both juniors, spoke to the Bronx Times as they worked on a steam boiler in the HVAC shop. They explained that as ninth graders, students rotate through all the trades and choose their top three at the end of the year.

Nunez said he comes from a construction family and initially thought he should try something different, yet he also found himself drawn to that career path. “I really like it,” Nunez said. The school’s senior class recently defended its first-place title in a local trades competition, where many judges come to scout future hires. Looking ahead to next year’s competition, “We’ll be ready for that,” Nunez said.

Germosen said he finds the HVAC curriculum “very understandable” and that he’s amazed at how much he and his peers have learned, starting from

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zero. Deciding to enroll at the Academy was “one of the greatest decisions of my life,” he said.

Bob Bieder, who owns Westchester Square Plumbing Supply, has taken student interns from the school for the past 30 years and put them to work — with great results. “They’re very impressive,” he said. “These kids want to work.”

Because Bronx Design and Construction Academy is a DOE public school, students receive their regular education alongside specialized classes and graduate with great skills in math and communication, Bieder said. “They really do a complete, full job here, and these kids come out of here ready to meet the workforce.”

Mark Vega, who graduated from the school in 1986, now owns Quality Heating Design on Bronxwood Ave. and remains heavily involved at his alma mater. As a student, he got a part-time job in 11th grade and a full-time job the following year at a company he stayed with for the next 13 years. After 26 years in union jobs, he eventually decided to work for himself, he said.

Today, Vega said he’s passionate about getting young people into the industry, highlighting both the job satisfaction and lucrative career paths. “What pushes people? Money, right?” But Vega also said he gained a strong sense of responsibility starting as a teenage worker. After all, a building can explode if its systems are not properly maintained.

He recalled a time when, as a student employee, he got a 7 p.m. service call and didn’t feel like going. But when he showed up, he saw an elderly woman shivering in the doorway. “The minute I saw her freezing, I said, ‘Don’t worry, I’m gonna start your boiler,’” Vega said. “You gotta have some kind of compassion to help people.”

Diamond in the rough



Current students are working on a second house project, which can take up to two years and involve every student in every specialization.

Photo by Emily Swanson

Jeff Kauffman, a fourth-year HVAC teacher, called the school “a diamond in the rough.”

“We do recruitment, but because there are so many schools, we can get a little lost,” he said. “We wish more people knew about it.”

Kauffman first learned his trade in a Yonkers high school and went on to become a business owner and consultant. But when a former HVAC teacher from the Academy retired, he called Kauffman and convinced him to leave the industry and begin a teaching career. “Four years later, I’m loving it. Best decision I made,” Kauffman said.

He showed the Bronx Times to the school’s pride and joy — a house entirely designed and built by students in the massive top-floor carpentry lab.

Over the sound of banging hammers and buzzing saws, carpentry teacher Kimberly Colón said the project took about two years, from planning to framing to cabinets, appliances, plumbing and more. Now, with one house completed, students are hard at work on another. Colón graduated from the Academy only two years ago and is training for her carpentry license. She said “seeing what is currently up to date” in the industry is a great advantage for her as a teacher barely older than the students.

“Bringing the new side of the industry, the new tools, showing them to these kids ... honestly, it’s really worth it,” she said. “This group has done super well. They’re hard workers.”

Eleventh-grade architecture student Michael Hernandez helped design the plans for the second house. The biggest challenge is making everything to scale using a one-quarter-inch to one-foot ratio, he said.

“It’s an honor” to work on the project, Hernandez said. “I appreciate Bronx Design for getting us on the path we want to be.”

Reach Emily Swanson at eswanson@schnepsmedia.com or (646) 717-0015. For more coverage, subscribe to our [newsletter](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)!

Emily Swanson



Emily Swanson is a reporter at the Bronx Times and 2023 graduate of the CUNY Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism. Originally from Minneapolis, MN, she now lives in the South Bronx neighborhood of Port Morris. She enjoys cooking, photography and rooting for the Knicks, Timberwolves, Liberty and Yankees.



More in Kids & Education



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Bronx high school prepares next generation of construction pros

Isabella Giardina • Apr 30, 2026, 5:54 AM • Updated 29 days ago

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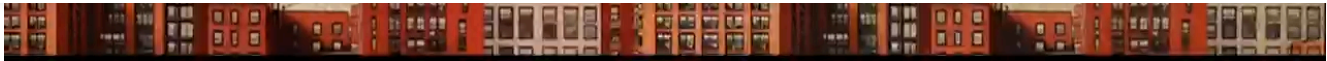
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A Bronx high school is preparing the next generation of tradesmen.

Inside the Bronx Design & Construction Academy, students aren't just sitting at desks—they're learning by doing.

Rocco Lacertosa says this program gives students a great head start to their careers.

"This is a very good training ground for them to, you know, learn skills, get out into units, work for companies, and earn a good living," he says.

The four-year career and technical education program blends academics with real-world job training, helping students build a strong foundation for future careers.

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Bob Bieder, president of Westchester Square Plumbing Supply, says he hires interns from this program every year. He says the passion he sees in these kids is unmatched.

"Every one of them really wants to work hard. You know, a lot of them come out of poor families where they started with nothing, and now they have real careers where they're making great salaries," he says.

Freshmen at the school rotate through a variety of trades, including electrical, plumbing, HVAC, architecture and carpentry. It gives them a chance to discover what fits them best.

Students work on plumbing systems, use professional architectural tools, and even build a house from the ground up.

Student Luis Francisco is in the carpentry side of the program and says he now has the tools to get a full-time job.



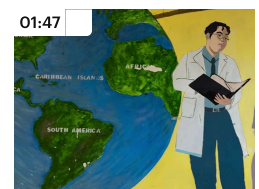
"I definitely feel like I'm going to be ready because I'm preparing us for the future. And we're already getting, like, the firsthand side of it, and it will just be better from here," he says.

From the classroom to the construction site, these students are already laying out the groundwork for their futures, one project at a time.

For more information on the school, click [here](#).



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LOCAL NEWS

Students building houses inside Bronx school

by: [Greg Mocker](#)

Posted: Apr 30, 2026 / 05:32 PM EDT

Updated: Apr 30, 2026 / 06:19 PM EDT

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THE BRONX, N.Y. (PIX11) — Homework is a part of school curriculum. At Bronx Design and Construction Academy, students are working to build a house inside their classroom.

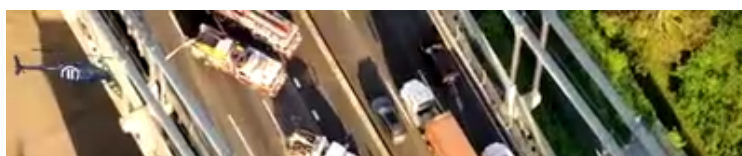
At the NYC Public School facility in the Melrose neighborhood of the Bronx, students are getting hands-on experience that goes beyond textbooks. Inside a large lab space on East 151st Street, there's room for two homes under construction.

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Each year, students take on an ambitious assignment: build a one-bedroom house from the ground up, complete with electrical wiring, plumbing, heating systems, and custom carpentry.

For senior Aniyah Colson, the experience has been eye-opening.

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“When I came here and I started learning the trade, I saw we can be real and build a house,” she said. “We made the cabinets ourselves,” she explained. “Carpentry is more than building houses. We start out with the basics and how to use the tools.”

The academy offers training across multiple trades, including plumbing, electrical work, drafting, and HVAC systems. It’s a collaborative effort, with students from different disciplines working simultaneously to bring each house to life.

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“We have all five disciplines working at the same time to make this house live and liveable,” said instructor Orvil Boatswain. “My favorite part of the job is to see when a student actually understands,” he said. “There’s a look on their face when they put it together, and they start diving in, taking it seriously.”

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The program also partners with local businesses and industry professionals, giving students exposure to real-world opportunities.

Stanley Santos, an 11th-grade student in the program, says it’s a powerful alternative for students

“If you’re someone that thinks you don’t want to go to college or school isn’t for you, this is a great program and it’s hands-on work,” Santos said.

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The 2026 Who's Who in Energy

The executives, advocates and environmentalists shaping New York's energy future.



City & State presents the 2026 Who's Who in Energy. Photo: Johnnie Johnson/Staff

By CITY & STATE

APRIL 26, 2026



WHO'S WHO

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

PUBLISHER'S SECTION

New York is at a pivot point on energy policy. Gov. Kathy Hochul is leading the charge to scale back the state's landmark climate change law, citing surging inflation, federal opposition to renewable power and the war in Iran that has fuel prices soaring. Meanwhile, local residents have battled projects ranging from battery storage to onshore wind power. "Put simply, something has to give," the governor opined in a recent commentary.

Now, the governor is looking to slow down the shift away from natural gas while also embracing nuclear power. At the same time, the state remains on the forefront of clean energy investment: Reliance on solar power is increasing, a new hydropower transmission line is nearing completion and offshore wind projects are advancing despite threats from the White House.

City & State's Who's Who in Energy, researched and written in partnership with journalist Lon Cohen, highlights the key stakeholders who are in the middle of the high-stakes debate over New York's energy future.

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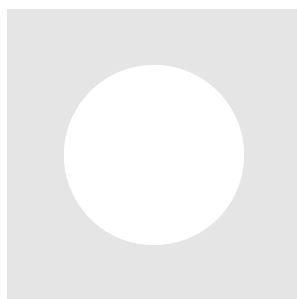
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DeLair, Kris*Executive Director, Empire State Energy Association**Kris DeLair / Kris DeLair*

For nearly two decades, Kris DeLair has represented the companies that deliver heating fuel to communities across New York state. As executive director of the Empire State Energy Association, she advocates for more than 700 largely family-owned businesses serving about 1.4 million homes and employers statewide. DeLair has pushed to expand biodiesel and renewable diesel within New York's fuel mix, weighing in on debates over school bus electrification, grid strain and rising energy costs. She's consistent in her message that climate policy must also work in reality.



There is less than a week until the April 1 budget deadline. (AP Photo/Hans Pennink)

STATE OF POLITICS

As state budget talks stall, perspective from other states

BY [JACK ARPEY](#) | NEW YORK STATE
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As state budget negotiations continue with less than a week until the April 1 deadline, the major points of contention between Gov. Kathy Hochul and state lawmakers in the state Senate and Assembly are Hochul's proposals to change the state's car insurance policy and New York's landmark 2019 climate law.

exclusively focused on affordability for New Yorkers.”

As Hochul and lawmakers prepare to likely go into overtime, Tom Stebbins, executive director of the Lawsuit Reform Alliance of New York and Floyd Vergara, senior policy advisor for Clean Fuels Alliance America, offer perspective on how similar policies have worked in the governor's favor in other states.

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New York finalizes emissions-reporting requirements

Polluters will have to report greenhouse gas emissions in the Empire State.



BY: **MARIE J. FRENCH** | 12/04/2025 02:49 PM EST

ALBANY, New York — Power plants, factories, large dairy farms, landfills, fuel suppliers and other polluters based in New York will have to provide emissions reports to the state under new rules.

The Department of Environmental Conservation issued the final greenhouse gas reporting rules Monday. The reports will improve the granularity of emissions data and could support additional state regulations to reduce them.

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Why it matters: Democratic Gov. Kathy Hochul has framed the new state program as backfilling potential federal rollbacks. The Trump administration has proposed largely eliminating the Environmental Protection Agency’s greenhouse gas reporting requirements.

The reporting rule was originally part of the since-paused “cap and invest” proposal to support achieving the state’s 2019 climate law targets. It aimed to limit emissions and raise money for a clean energy transition.

Hochul initially embraced the [cap-and-trade-style program in 2023](#) but [paused it amid cost concerns](#) and her focus on affordability at the beginning of this year. The [state last month appealed](#) a judge's order [directing DEC to issue regulations](#) to achieve the climate law targets after [environmental groups sued over the "cap and invest" delay](#).

The governor has said she would consider working with the Legislature to revise the law. Some [moderate Democratic lawmakers are open to the discussion](#) as they're also concerned about the cost of implementing the law. Hochul and state lawmakers are up for reelection next year.

Emissions report: The state also released an [annual inventory of emissions](#) for 2023 Monday, as required by the 2019 climate law. That inventory shows total emissions in 2023 decreased by about 14 percent from the 1990 baseline.

The state's climate law requires reductions of 40 percent from 1990 levels by 2030 and 85 percent by 2050. Hochul's officials [do not plan to meet those targets](#), citing costs and federal headwinds.

Emissions rose from 2022 by less than 0.1 percent, an expected increase amid the economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. Energy sector emissions were 10 percent higher in 2023 compared to 2020, primarily driven by increased transportation emissions and the closure of the Indian Point nuclear power plant, which increased the state's reliance on fossil fuels.

Details: The new rules will require facilities that emit over 10,000 tons of carbon dioxide equivalents to report emissions based on New York's accounting system, which weighs the climate impact of greenhouse gases over a 20-year time frame. That means that under the new rules [natural gas is viewed as having a greater impact](#) compared to the more standard 100-year time horizon used in almost every other jurisdiction.

The draft rules were formally released for public comment in March. [Agency staff had completed draft regulations](#) for the reporting requirement and the rest of the package for "cap and invest" days before Hochul decided to delay the program.

Many of the facilities that will have to report emissions hold state air permits and already report emissions data. Other requirements are new, including for manure stored in liquid storage or anaerobic digesters above a certain threshold — waste from about 290 cows. The department made some changes to ensure smaller dairy farms aren't impacted.

Fuel suppliers bringing in any amount of natural gas, propane, fuel oil or gasoline must also report their emissions. Industry groups protested this requirement, arguing it would burden small businesses.

Rocco Lacertosa, the CEO of the New York State Energy Coalition, which represents heating oil suppliers, said the rule doesn't give proper credit for biofuels, treating them

similarly to traditional fossil fuels.

“That stands in contrast with best practices from states like California, where use of biofuels as a cost-effective, lower-emission alternative has risen steadily over time,” he said in a statement. “Refusing to use all the tools at our disposal to maintain plentiful energy options is antithetical to the affordability agenda, and in the end, it's consumers who will suffer.”

The DEC in its response to public comments indicated the state's climate law requires counting emissions from biofuels. DEC said they'll be reported separately from fossil fuels.

The final rule also includes a third-party verification requirement for emitters above a certain threshold, which some business groups had argued was too onerous in comments on the proposal.

Environmental groups offered mild praise for the state's final regulations, with several urging a release of the remaining cap-and-invest rules.

Vanessa Fajans-Turner, executive director of Environmental Advocates of NY, called it “meaningful progress” but also “only a first step.”

She said the state was moving backwards with Hochul's agreement to delay the all-electric buildings requirement and approval of a new pipeline.

“With climate impacts accelerating, and the federal government retreating, the state must move forward on the strongest possible cap and invest program to ensure major polluters are held fully accountable,” Fajans-Turner said.

What's next: The first reporting deadline isn't until mid-2027 for emissions in 2026. Several commenters associated with the fossil fuel industry questioned the constitutionality of the proposed regulation, indicating a potential for legal challenges.



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