



Riverkeeper's 2021 Legislative Memorandum
Support - S5939/A6761 (Ramos/Mamdani) - Support

Riverkeeper strongly supports the passage of [S5939/A6761](#) to establish a moratorium on fossil fuel power plants. If New York is to reach its carbon-free electricity standard by 2040, as mandated in the CLCPA, New York can no longer allow fossil fuel plants to be built.¹ This legislation would prohibit the permitting of fossil fuel-based power plants except under limited and rare scenarios, such as a demonstrable electrical reliability issue. As New York continues to make strides in expanding clean energy, it is imperative that the state send a clear market signal that the era of fossil fuel power generation is over. Passing this legislation would accomplish that goal and prevent locking in decades of harmful local and global pollution.

Fossil fuels, such as coal, oil, and gas are harmful to both public health and the environment by furthering the ongoing climate crisis and polluting clean water across the country. The fossil fuel industry negatively impacts public health and creates an annual cost of \$2.9 trillion caused by the effects of air pollution including diseases affecting the respiratory system and other non-communicable diseases resulting from high levels of air pollution.² Other health issues resulting from air pollution are shown to cause various long-term health issues including reduced lung function, asthma, and cardiovascular disease. In older people, higher levels of air pollution have even led to premature deaths.³ The burning of fossil fuels can cause a type of air pollution called fine particulate pollution. According to the New York City Health Department, from 2009-2011, fine particulate pollution was responsible for more than 2,000 deaths, roughly 1,500 hospital admissions for lung and heart conditions, and 5,000 emergency department admissions related to asthma.⁴ Allowing further expansion of fossil fuel power generation is an unacceptable environmental injustice, given the particularly pernicious impacts of peaker plants and other infrastructure on communities of color.

Reaching the ambitious statutory mandates of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) requires further action by the legislature to ensure New York State does not permit new fossil fuel power plants designed to operate for decades past our clean energy goals for the electric sector. Proposals such as the Danskammer relicensing and Astoria peaker plant must be stopped by any means necessary if New York is to achieve emissions targets. We urge the legislature to pass this bill expeditiously.

¹<https://www.eia.gov/state/print.php?sid=NY#:~:text=New%20York's%20Clean%20Energy%20Standard.%2D%20a nd%20small%2Dscale%20facilities.>

²<https://storage.googleapis.com/planet4-southeastasia-stateless/2020/02/21b480fa-toxic-air-report-110220.pdf>

³<https://www.law.nyu.edu/centers/state-impact/press-publications/research/climate-and-health/health-effects-of-burni ng-fossil-fuels>

⁴<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/data/data-publications/air-quality-nyc-community-air-survey.page>

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