



THIS WEEK IN NEW YORK COVERING NEW YORK & CITY GOVERNMENT

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"Obstacles don't define us. Rather, it is the unparalleled courage and character of us that defines us as a people. So my confidence in the future is steeped in our glorious past - in the face of adversity, we always persist. We persevere, we prevail." Governor Kathy Hochul

In the News-New York State



Comptroller DiNapoli: Improved Planning Needed for New York To Achieve Its Clean Energy Goals

State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli called upon the Public Service Commission (PSC) and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) to take stronger action to meet the state's clean energy goals.

The Comptroller's [audit](#) released Wednesday found inadequate planning, monitoring and assessment of risks and challenges in the PSC's efforts to help the state meet the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act's (Climate Act) targets, which seek 70% renewably sourced electricity by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2040.

"New York is moving in the right direction to transition to renewable energy, but we found better planning, monitoring of progress and timely assessment of risks by PSC is needed to achieve our ambitious clean energy goals," Comptroller DiNapoli explained. "New York has been a leader in its efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the threats caused by climate change, and identifying existing and emerging challenges will improve the likelihood that we succeed."

In an interview with the *Times Union* after the release of the audit, Governor Kathy Hochul acknowledged that the State will "probably" miss its environmental goals.

"If we miss it by a couple of years, which is probably what will happen, the goals are still worthy," Governor Hochul said. "...The cost has both gone up so much I now have to step back and say, 'What is the cost on the typical New York family?..Just like I did with congestion pricing.'"

Auditors found that the PSC, tasked under the Climate Act with establishing and reviewing the state's renewable energy program, sometimes used outdated data and wrong calculations to determine if the state could reach 70% renewably sourced electricity by 2030. The PSC did not update their calculations based on new laws and directives, which may drive clean energy demand and supply up, like electric vehicles, new green buildings, or electric cooling and heating.

PSC also did not fully account for other potential risks, and did not consider certain challenges that could delay meeting the state's clean energy targets. For example, according to the Independent System Operator, the state would need new technology not yet developed to account for the weather-related intermittency of renewables, as well as expanded transmission capability to get clean energy to consumers, to achieve the 2040 goal of 100% renewable statewide electric generation.

The audit found that the PSC did not develop a back-up plan if the Climate Act's goals were not met within prescribed timeframes, except for the continued reliance on fossil fuels, including "peaker plants," which generally operate at a higher monetary and environmental cost.

Comptroller DiNapoli cited cancellations of renewable energy projects as a major impediment to New York's progress toward meeting the Climate Act's goals, and auditors determined that the PSC did not plan properly for the historical project cancellation rate. As of April 2023, there were 230 large-scale renewable projects awarded contracts within the Climate Act program, and 28 projects were cancelled from 2005 to 2023. Of the remaining 202 projects, only 30% were completed, and on average it takes 5 years for a large-scale renewable project to be up and running.

The PSC also did not fully plan for expiring contracts, which could lead to higher costs. Most contracts for renewable energy sources have a 10 to a 20 year span. The audit found that between 2007 and 2022, 81 contracts expired, which could lead to New York paying more than the original price once the contract expires. Additionally, there is no guarantee these facilities will then sell the renewable electricity they generate into the New York power grid and contribute to achieving the Climate Act goals.

The PSC did not reasonably estimate or verify other entities' estimates of the cost of the transition to renewable energy. Auditors found that the absence of cost estimates also makes it difficult, if not impossible, to assess its impact on New Yorkers. PSC officials stated that they expect the cost for renewable energy to decrease as time goes on, but did not produce an analysis that demonstrated how quickly they expect these costs to decline.

Comptroller DiNapoli's audit recommended the PSC:

- Begin a comprehensive review of the Climate Act, including an assessment of progress towards the goals and annual funding commitments and expenditures;
- Analyze and address existing and emerging risks and known issues on a continual basis to minimize the impact on the state's ability to meet Climate Act goals;
- Provide a more accurate representation of the likelihood of meeting targets by assessing expected renewable energy generation and timing of projects not yet operable; and,
- Perform a detailed analysis of cost estimates and periodically report results to the public, and assess the extent to which ratepayers will be responsible for Climate Act implementation costs.

The audit also recommends NYSERDA:

- Take steps to ensure proposals are evaluated consistently and contracts are awarded to the most qualified proposers.

In response, PSC did not agree with several of the audit's findings, including that it uses outdated or incorrect calculations for planning purposes. It also referred to events such as the COVID-19 pandemic impacting cost analysis. NYSERDA generally agreed with the audit's recommendations and said it had implemented changes to its procedures.

In the News-New York City



Mayor Adams Announces New Appointments to Help Lead NYC Government

New York City Mayor Eric Adams this week announced several new appointments within the Adams Administration. Chauncey Parker has been appointed to serve as Assistant Deputy Mayor for Public Safety; Reggie Thomas has been appointed to serve as Chief of Staff in the Office of the First Deputy Mayor; and Frank Dwyer has been appointed to serve as Chief of Staff in the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Communications. Additionally, Katherine Maro has been promoted to First Deputy Chief of Staff in the Office of the Chief of Staff.

Most recently, Parker served as Deputy Commissioner for Collaborative Policing for the New York City Police Department. Since 1995, Parker has also served as the Executive Director of the New York/New Jersey High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas program that invests in federal, state, and local partnerships to build safe and healthy communities. During this time, Parker has additionally served as an Assistant United States attorney in the Southern District of New York and as Director of Criminal Justice and Commissioner of the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services. Parker is a graduate of Rollins College and Duke University School of Law.

Thomas previously served as Senior Vice President of Government Affairs at the Real Estate Board of New York and was a principal at Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies. He also served in the de Blasio administration as First Deputy Director of City Legislative Affairs and in the Bloomberg administration as Deputy Director of City Legislative Affairs and Senior Policy Advisor.

Prior to joining the Mayor's Office, Thomas was Legislative and Budget Director for then-City Councilmember Leroy Comrie, staff director for the Queens City Council delegation, and an aide in the Manhattan Borough President's Office. He is a graduate of Pace University.

Dwyer previously served as Deputy Commissioner for Public Information at the New York City Department of Correction (DOC) and as Deputy Commissioner for Public Information and External Affairs at the Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY). Prior to his time at FDNY, Dwyer worked at NY1 News and WNBC-TV. He holds in a B.A. in Communications and English from Iona University.

Maro previously served as a Deputy Chief of Staff for Mayor Adams and as Chief of Staff for Operations at New York City Public Schools. While at New York City Public Schools, Maro also served as Chief of Staff to the Chief Academic Officer, Chief of Staff for the Division of Specialized Instruction and Student Support, and Deputy Director for the Litigation Implementation Unit. Maro holds a B.S. in Social Studies Education from New York University and a M.A. in Education and Politics from the Columbia University Teachers College.



Bills Passed by the City Council

Introduction 118-A, sponsored by Deputy Speaker Diana Ayala, Requires the Department of Education (DOE) to post dress code policies on its website and report on dress code policies in DOE schools for five years, including information about whether each school has a dress code policy and data on dress code violations and penalties, broken down by month, week, and student race and gender.

Introduction 435-A, sponsored by Council Member Pierina Sanchez, Requires the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) to make available rapid testing services for sexually transmitted infections in at least 4 boroughs.

Introduction 863-A, sponsored by Council Member Justin Brannan, Requires public notice if an actual contract differs from the agency procurement plan in terms of contract length, nature of services, or affected civil service titles and headcount. It would also apply these requirements to contract amendments that would increase a contract's value to over \$1 million and reduce the public notice period for such unplanned contract actions from 60 to 10 days.

Briefs

Governor Hochul Signs Legislation to Reduce Case Backlog in Family and Civil Courts

Governor Kathy Hochul this week signed legislation to reduce case backlog in family and civil courts by expanding the number of judges appointed and elected statewide.

Chapter 240 of the Laws of 2024 increases the number of family and civil court judges throughout New York State by 28. Two will be assigned to Nassau County, two will be assigned to Suffolk County, and one additional judge will be assigned in each of the following counties: Cayuga, Chenango, Cortland, Erie, Jefferson, Rensselaer, Rockland and Westchester counties.

The legislation will also add 16 judges for New York City, including citywide positions that will be distributed across the five boroughs at the discretion of the Mayor of the City of New York.

According to the Governor, these reforms will help address well-documented backlogs and delays throughout the family court process and expedite proceedings.

Comptroller DiNapoli Releases Report on SFY 2024-25 Financial Plan Period of Relative Fiscal Stability Provides Opportunity to Tackle State’s Structural Budget Challenges

New York’s financial outlook is in a relatively stable position, but continues to have a structural budget deficit, with a cumulative three-year budget gap of \$13.9 billion forecasted by the Division of the Budget (DOB), according to a [report](#) by State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli on the State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2024-25 Enacted Budget Financial Plan. Comptroller DiNapoli says action is needed to align projected state spending with revenues and address factors that challenge the state’s finances.

“The current economic expansion enabled the state to close the prior fiscal year in a stronger financial position than the Division of the Budget anticipated, reduced outyear budget gaps and allowed for increasing rainy day reserves,” Comptroller DiNapoli said. “But the structural imbalance in the state’s finances remains. With the state in a relatively stable position, now is the time to be strategic in managing the budget to better prepare for upcoming fiscal challenges and ensure long-term success.”

According to DOB, All Funds disbursements in SFY 2024-25 are projected to total \$239.2 billion, compared to \$236.7 billion in All Funds receipts. DOB projects growth in disbursements will far exceed growth in revenues over the course of the Financial Plan, ending in SFY 2027-28. Compared to SFY 2023-24, State Operating Funds spending is estimated to increase by more than 18.8%, compared to a projected increase in State Operating Fund revenues of 4.2%, through SFY 2027-28.

While DOB’s projected decrease in the three-year cumulative budget gap, from \$20.1 billion to \$13.9 billion, is an improvement, gaps could widen if state spending increases beyond DOB’s projections or economic conditions weaken. A slowdown in the economy will likely lead to an increase in demand for government services, putting further pressure upon the estimated budget gaps.

Spending in recent years has been driven by school aid and Medicaid; the two are forecasted to account for over 50% of all General Fund disbursements in SFY 2024-25, and the share is projected to grow to 52.3% by SFY 2027-28. State-share Medicaid is projected to grow more than 24.2% from SFY 2023-24 to SFY 2027-28.

Long Island Judge Blocks Limit on NY Legislators' Outside Income

State Supreme Court Justice Alison Napolitano of Suffolk County issued a [decision](#) this week that will prevent the cap on State Legislators' outside income from taking effect while a lawsuit filed by Republican lawmakers continues..

Under 2022 legislation to increase legislative salaries, state legislators are barred from earning more than \$35,000 a year outside of their public salaries, effective January 1, 2025.

In her ruling, Justice Napolitano, wrote that leaving the cap in place while the case is ongoing could harm lawmakers and candidates who currently must decide whether to give up their outside businesses or jobs.

“With these decisions, it is conceivable that by giving up their businesses and employment, the affected legislators will have to take certain drastic, often permanent, actions usually associated with the ending of a business or a job,” Justice Napolitano wrote.

Governor Hochul Announces Launch of Application for Free Civil Service Exam to Pursue Careers in Law Enforcement

Governor Kathy Hochul this week announced that the application period is now open for New York State's entry-level law enforcement civil service exam. There is no cost to take the exam as all state exam application fees are waived through December 2025.

The exam is for qualified applicants seeking a position throughout the Empire State at the Department of Environmental Conservation, the Office of State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and the State University of New York. Candidates can [apply online](#) until 11:59 p.m. EST on August 14, 2024, to take the exam, scheduled for the fall.

Construction Begins on NY's Largest Offshore Wind Project

Construction has begun on New York's largest offshore wind project, Sunrise Wind, a 924-megawatt project developed by Ørsted. Once completed, the project will provide enough clean energy to power approximately 600,000 New York homes.

Sunrise Wind project which will support more than 800 direct jobs during the construction phase of the project and is estimated to spur economic benefits from the Capital Region to Long Island – including a \$700 million investment in Suffolk County alone. It will be built under project labor agreements ensuring local union labor's participation in all phases of construction, according to Governor Kathy Hochul.

The project will be located approximately 30 miles east of Montauk, New York, with an approved transmission route connecting to the State's electricity grid at the Holbrook Substation in the Town of Brookhaven in Suffolk County.

Governor Hochul also announced the issuance of New York's fifth offshore wind solicitation. Final proposals for the offshore wind projects are due by 3 p.m. on September 9, 2024. Interested proposers can apply on NYSERDA's [website](#). A webinar will be held on July 22, 2024 at 10 a.m. ET to provide more information on the offshore wind solicitation and a future coordinated supply chain solicitation. Those interested in the webinar can register [here](#) and are encouraged to submit questions in advance to offshorewind@nyserda.ny.gov.

Lawsuit Charges MTA With Cutting Bus Service Across the City in Response to Congestion Pricing Pause

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) has cut bus service in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan by 10% due to Governor Kathy Hochul's pause of congestion pricing, according to a lawsuit filed by the New York City Transport Workers Union Local 100 (TWU Local 100) and Public Advocate Jumaane Williams.

The [lawsuit](#), filed in Manhattan Supreme Court, asserts that on or about July 12th the MTA began reducing the number of buses leaving depots daily "to save bus driver pay, which on these cut runs, was generally paid at an overtime rate." The suit calls upon the court to block the MTA from proceeding with the service cuts.

TWU Local 100 and the Public Advocate argue the reductions violate state law that requires the MTA give 30 days-notice of non-emergency reductions to service. Specifically, sections 1204(15) and 1205(4) of the New York State Public Authorities Law require the MTA to give 30 days' notice of any non-emergency bus service reduction to the City of New York.

2024 Republican Presidential/Vice Presidential Ticket: Trump/Vance

This week the Republican National Committee, at the convention in Milwaukee, selected former president Donald Trump and Ohio Senator J.D. Vance as its 2024 Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates.

The Democratic National Committee will hold its convention August 19th to 22nd in Chicago.

Voters across the county will go to the polls on Tuesday, November 5th.

Coming Up ***New York State***

****There are currently no meetings scheduled for the week of July 22-26****

New York City

Wednesday, July 24th

Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises, 250 Broadway – Committee Room, 16th Floor, 11 a.m.

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