August 23, 2019

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Executive Chamber
Capitol Building
Albany, N.Y. 12224

RE: S.23 (Parker)/A.4294 (Cusick)
Protecting Large Scale Renewables

Dear Governor Cuomo,

The Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter urges you to sign into law S.23/A.4294, an act in relation to maintaining the continued viability of the state's existing large-scale, renewable energy resources.

With your leadership and the passage of the historic Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA), New York soon will be committing to a 70% renewable energy grid by 2030 and a 100% carbon neutral grid by 2040, putting New York ahead of every state in the union in the generation sector. This ambitious transition requires that we move towards a zero-carbon society where our entire transportation, heating, industrial and building sectors will be electrified by 2050. All that electricity will have to come from renewable sources such as wind, solar, and hydro-generation.

In order to meet these goals, we are going to need every resource available in NY, including our existing renewables. Currently, about a quarter of the state's electrical generation is considered renewable with the majority of that power coming from hydroelectric facilities. As we reach for exponential growth of new renewable generation, it is important make sure that we do not neglect maintenance and state procurement of our existing capacity. It will not help us in the long run if for every new MW of renewable power we create, we lose a MW to attrition or out-of-state sales of that power.

Currently, New York does not allow existing generators to participate in State procurement programs designed to promote renewable energy, but Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) in neighboring states do. New York faces the real threat of losing a significant portion of our base line, renewable energy generation to out-of-state sales of that power.
state public utilities attempting to fulfill their own climate change/renewable energy procurement goals. While we still have the obligation to fund and facilitate the mass expansion of renewables in New York, protecting our existing generation base is more cost effective than investments in new development.

We are urging you to act immediately and sign S.23/A.4294 into law, to ensure that NY utilities are responsible for procuring renewable energy from existing NY facilities. This will support both our climate goals and the 22,000 jobs already in New York’s renewable energy sector. Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Roger Downs
Conservation Director
Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter