Memorandum of Support

January 20, 2022

S.6843-A (Kavanagh)/A.8431 (Gallagher)

Summary: Enacts the "All-electric Building Act"; prohibits permitting for the construction of new buildings that are not all-electric buildings

Statement of Support: Residential and commercial buildings account for approximately 29% of total U.S. energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. Phasing out fossil fuels in favor of geothermal and air source heat pumps and induction stoves is a cost-effective tool in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Requiring all electric buildings for new construction is necessary in order to achieve the greenhouse gas emission reduction goals established in New York State’s historic Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA).

This legislation, the All-electric Building Act, would prohibit cities, towns, and villages from issuing a permit for the construction of any new commercial, residential, or mixed-use mixed fuel building, except when such all-electric building is proven to be infeasible. It would also prohibit issuing building or construction permits that would convert an all-electric building or project into a mixed-fuel building. "Mixed-fuel buildings" are defined as buildings that use a combination of electricity and natural gas, propane, or oil to meet building energy needs. It would not apply to buildings that use geothermal or solar energy to meet heating and cooling energy needs in otherwise all-electric buildings. The All-electric Building Act would direct the Department of Public Service, the Division of Housing and Community Renewal, the Department of State, and the Energy Research and Development Authority to report jointly to the Governor and Legislature regarding any electric rate design or policy changes needed to ensure the Act does not diminish affordable housing production or affordability of electricity for customers in all-electric buildings.

Companies seeking approval for infrastructure to transport and distribute natural gas in New York have stated that the need for infrastructure growth is the result of projected increased demand for natural gas in new buildings. Requiring all electric buildings for new construction will eliminate the need for this unnecessary natural gas infrastructure that threatens the goals outlined in the CLCPA. We must equitably phase out fossil fuels and make the transition to electrified buildings that are affordable, free of indoor air pollution, and environmentally sustainable.

The Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter Strongly Urges Your Support of S.6843-A/A.8431