Memorandum of Support

January 9, 2022

S.1421 Serrano *No Same As

**Purpose:** To prohibit the lease of state forests, wildlife management areas, and unique areas for the purpose of gas production.

**Statement of Support:** Fossil fuel extraction on public lands accounts for nearly 25% of all U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.¹ The leasing of public lands and waters disturbs wildlife habitat, adversely impacts communities’ access to clean air, clean water, and outdoor recreation, and threatens culturally significant sites. Nationwide, the oil and gas industry has stockpiled millions of acres of leases on public lands and waters. Oil and gas companies currently have an estimated 7,700 unused, approved permits to drill.² In January 2021, President Biden signed an Executive Order directing the Department of the Interior to pause new oil and natural gas leasing on public lands and offshore waters.³ The order does not restrict energy activities on private or state lands, or lands that the US holds in trust or restricted status for Tribes or individual Indians.

The exploration, development, and production of gas in state-owned lands is prohibited in NYS parks and the lands under the waters of Lake Ontario and along its shorelines. This bill would add state forests, wildlife management areas, and unique areas to the list of publicly owned lands where the exploration, development, and production of gas is prohibited.

The Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act mandates that the state achieves a 70% renewable energy grid by 2030, a 100% zero-emission grid by 2040, and near-elimination of all greenhouse gases by 2050. In order to achieve our renewable energy targets, New York must transition from fossil fuels to wind, solar, and geothermal power. Legislative action is necessary to ensure future gas production on public lands is prohibited as we focus on a just and equitable transition to a renewable and resilient New York. This bill would also help push us toward our goal of protecting 30% of lands and waters in the United States by 2030. Keeping fossil fuels in the ground on public lands will help us move past a dirty-fuels economy, help sequester carbon and decrease existing carbon pollution, and conserve lands and waters for current and future generations.

The Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter Strongly Urges Your Support of S.1421.