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This is how Kathy Hochul is delivering climate action and affordable energy | Opinion

3-minute read

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Since taking office, Gov. Kathy Hochul has proven her unwavering commitment to climate action that meets the urgency of the climate crisis, while ensuring that New York remains an affordable place for the millions of hardworking families across the state.

Recognizing we have no time to lose in the climate fight but cognizant of the near-term challenges we face, the governor put forward an executive budget with some of the most significant climate proposals we've seen in years, including an economy-wide cap-and-invest proposal. She recognized that we must reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions while also protecting the competitiveness of our businesses and retaining jobs.

To keep a sharp focus on affordability, the governor also directed State agencies to look at consumer cost impacts.

When the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act was passed in 2019, it included a way of counting New York's emissions that differs from the scientific standard used by nearly every other state and country in the world. In addition, no cost analysis was completed at that time, and as we all know, the economic landscape has changed dramatically since 2019.

The reality is that we are advancing this transformation to fight climate change at a time in which many New Yorkers are struggling financially and economically. Now, under Hochul's

direction, we are taking a close look at consumer cost impacts to ensure we will reach our climate goals while protecting New Yorkers. As it stands today, the climate act's emissions accounting method is certain to be a major driver of future costs for New York families.

As the governor and Legislature continue to negotiate the state budget, proposals put forth to limit potentially significant consumer costs deserve consideration.

Fighting climate change won't work if people and businesses can't afford it. Burdensome costs will impede essential climate progress. For our climate action plans to be successful, our state's climate leadership must be affordable for everyone.

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The governor and her administration's track record of decisive action to move away from fossil fuels toward a zero-emission economy speaks for itself. This accounting issue must be explored to protect consumers, and our transition away from all fossil fuels will continue apace.

We're confident that the final budget will shape up to include historic climate commitments — including an economy-wide cap-and-invest program, ways to accelerate our development of renewable energy and our transition to all-electric buildings — so we can ultimately reach our climate goals while ensuring affordability for New York families.

Basil Seggos, commissioner of the state Department of Environmental Conservation, and Doreen Harris, president and CEO of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, co chair the New York State Climate Action Council.

