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POLL: NEW YORKERS SUPPORT EFFORTS ON CLIMATE CHANGE, BUT THEY WANT TO KEEP THEIR NATURAL GAS

Polling from The Siena College Research for New Yorkers for Affordable Energy Shows Cost Concerns Weigh Heavily on New Yorker's Minds

Most New Yorkers are Not Familiar with the State's Proposed Climate Policies, Strongly Support Keeping Natural Gas as Part of the Energy & Heating Mix, and Oppose Cost Increases

Upstate New York Voters, Particularly Those in the Western Portions of the State, Consistently Reject the Policies of the Climate Action Council & Overwhelmingly Support the Use of Natural Gas

(Albany, NY) – The New Yorkers for Affordable Energy (NYAE) coalition today released polling results from a survey conducted by the Siena College Research Institute which shows that large majorities of New Yorkers – especially in Upstate and Western New York – strongly support keeping natural gas as part of the state's energy mix. Further, while a majority of New Yorkers favor State action to tackle climate change, they strongly believe that the most serious problem facing New York is cost of living, and that the financial impact of climate policies is a serious concern.

Siena researchers also concluded that New Yorkers are concerned about the costs associated with aggressive electrification policies. New York consumers use and like natural gas and, overall, prefer a transition that continues to include the availability of natural gas. The research concluded that an overwhelming majority of New Yorkers (80%) also agree that an “all-of-the-above” approach using electric, fuels like natural gas, renewable natural gas and hydrogen would lessen emissions and promote energy efficiency.

The full results of the polling will be made available upon request to:
info@ny4affordableenergy.com

Siena's research findings show that voters are largely aligned with the points NYAE has been making for years: while they do support doing what they can to help the environment, voters are concerned about cost, and not only want to keep natural gas as an option for heating and powering their homes, but also believe that natural gas can help New York achieve its climate goals.

Some key findings from the polling include:

- **87%** are concerned about the costs that consumers will have to absorb moving away from heating with natural gas, propane, or oil;
- **83%** of consumers say they are not willing to pay more than \$100 more a month on their energy bills;
- A strong majority (**80%**) are concerned that switching all buildings to being all-electric will result in power outages;
- Western New Yorkers strongly opposed measures to phase out gas appliances including new construction (**68%**), and a phase out in existing residential homes (**65%**);
- Three-quarters of all respondents use natural gas in their homes. Of those, **60%** would be either very (**35%**) or somewhat (**25%**) upset if they no longer had the option to use natural gas for cooking. Nearly two-thirds of all respondents are either not very (**29%**) or not at all (**33%**) familiar with the provisions of New York's Climate Law, and;
- **Two-thirds** of respondents across all demographics don't think we can generate enough electricity to heat our buildings and hot water on the plan's timeline.

QUOTES FROM STAKEHOLDERS

Buffalo South District Councilmember, President Pro Tempore, Christopher Scanlon:

"Before a full-scale conversion from natural gas to other alternatives can take place, all potential impacts to the residents of Buffalo must be taken into account. I am in full support of clean energy initiatives which provide benefits to the environment, but the legislative framework for these types of transitions must be fully in place prior to implementation. We cannot expect city residents, especially low-income families, to carry the financial burden of the potential upgrades required to meet certain thresholds for which the state is not prepared."

Constance Bradley, President, Transport Workers Union Local 101:

"People are worried about getting socked with higher costs and more frequent power outages. Imposing gas bans will force homeowners to shell out tens of thousands of dollars to increase the electricity capacity of their homes and buy new equipment. Putting every building on the Grid will make it more likely the system will get overwhelmed and falter."

Mike Florio, CEO, Long Island Builder's Institute:

"Like most New Yorkers, we support the goals of the climate action council and the need to transition towards a clean energy future. The transition period should include a mix of clean fuels, including natural gas, a realistic timeline for implementation that does not additionally burden consumers with increased costs and further certainty that the grid is capable and resilient enough to handle the increased load."

Dottie Gallagher, President & CEO, Buffalo Niagara Partnership:

"Any proposal to ban natural gas is impractical, irresponsible, and will do significant damage to our state economy. New York can and must safeguard both our environment, but in a practical way that safeguards our economy. Lawmakers should reject any budget that includes any phase out of natural gas."

Tom Grech, President and CEO, Queens Chamber of Commerce:

"New Yorkers from every region of the state understand that we need to urgently fight climate change, while ensuring that we have affordable, reliable and safe energy sources. Natural gas can continue to heat and power homes and small businesses throughout New York while helping the state meet its climate goals. We must make sure it remains accessible, particularly at a time when many are struggling to keep up with the rising cost of living and doing business."

Pat Guidice, Business Manager, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 1049:

"We are facing a crisis in New York with the rush to ban natural gas based on ideology without considering how that ban will affect energy customers and working families. The potential for economic catastrophe facing the state, working families, and businesses will be devastating. Tens of thousands of New Yorkers work every day on the natural gas system to provide reliable and safe energy for millions of their neighbors. They will face mass unemployment. We need a PLAN not a BAN! If the State continues down this road, many will lose their jobs and more businesses will leave the State. Why would anyone even think it's acceptable to cause economic harm to workers during a time when the cost of living is skyrocketing? I have not seen any real plan for 'Just Transition', I only see 'transition' to low wage employment."

John Samuelsen, International President, Transport Workers Union:

"New Yorkers aren't stupid. They know who will wind up footing the bill if the state bans natural gas, and mandates every building only use electricity for heating, cooking, and all other energy needs. They will. When that happens, they won't be concerned anymore. They will be furious. And even more so when members of their communities are put out of work due to lack of just transition for workers in the natural gas industry."

Daniel Ortega, Engineers Labor-Employer Cooperative Local 825:

"What is most obvious from the data is that Albany's priorities are the opposite of what every day New Yorkers want when it comes to their energy needs. We need to prioritize affordable energy solutions that put trades people to work. When you compare the traditional versus renewable energy sources, the work hours don't compare. We must continue to prioritize natural gas."

Ken Pokalsky, Vice President of Government Affairs, The Business Council of New York State:

"In this survey, New Yorkers are expressing concerns similar to we have been hearing from businesses across New York State. The state's current blueprint for meeting renewable energy

and greenhouse gas reduction targets provides little to no information on the future cost of energy and provides too little detail on how the reliability of the state's electric grid will be maintained as we move toward 100% renewable generation. It is essential that New York have a complete plan for meeting the state's environmental and energy goals while assuring adequate and affordable energy for businesses and residents alike."

Kyle Strober, Executive Director, Association for a Better Long Island:

"While the aspirational goal of a carbon free energy future is an admirable objective, ignoring the realities of how people heat their homes, prepare their food, and leverage natural gas to drive the economy has the potential to put our state at risk. This proposal can't be achieved by regulatory dictate and certainly not without a master plan with business input."

ABOUT THE POLLING

The Siena College Research Institute conducted a survey among New York residents from February 5-9, 2023, seeking to understand peoples' opinions on the proposals in the Scoping Plan that is associated with New York State's clean energy and climate agenda. A total of 897 surveys were completed with a margin of error of +/- 3/7 percentage points after considering the design effect of weighting. An online proprietary panel was used to complete 400 surveys. The remaining surveys were completed by phone using a dual frame (land and cell) random-digit dial sample.

There was an oversample of western New York residents in Erie and Niagara counties (a sub-sample of 100) which has a margin of error of +/- 9.8 percentage points including the design effect resulting from weighting. The respondents from this sub-sample of western New York residents were weighted in the New York State data to be representative of their statewide proportion.

New Yorkers for Affordable Energy is a coalition of community, labor, business and industry leaders from across the state who support greater access to clean, reliable and affordable sources of energy for residential and business consumers. We understand the important role that natural gas plays in our everyday lives, from heating and cooling our homes to powering our communities. As demand for energy continues to grow, New Yorkers for Affordable Energy supports efforts to reduce stateside greenhouse gas emissions. Our coalition believes in a diverse, all-of-the-above approach to New York's electric grid, and that natural gas can and should be used to facilitate decarbonization. Natural gas is still widely used in manufacturing facilities, power production, transportation, and serves as a catalyst for job growth, supporting New York's economy and quality of life.
