

October 20, 2022

New York State Climate Action Council  
625 Broadway  
Albany, NY 12233-0001

The Town of Ancram affirms that climate change is real, that combatting it is imperative, and that most initiatives and strategies in the proposed New York State Climate Action Council Scoping Plan are warranted. However, *how* those ends are achieved is equally important.

The Town of Ancram has long been a leader in protecting our environment. Our 2010 Comprehensive Plan called for protecting groundwater, watersheds, woodlands, ridgelines, wildlife habitats, clean air, and dark skies—and encourages the use of alternative energy sources. The 2019 update to that Comp Plan extends those protections to ensure a sustainable and resilient community. Our Conservation Advisory Council is an acclaimed leader throughout the mid-Hudson Valley. Local standards, local initiative, and local action produced results.

True to our vision, in November 2020, the Ancram Town Board unanimously resolved that the Town “urges Governor Andrew Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York; the New York State Senate and the New York State Assembly to adopt legislation which would meet the challenges of climate change without violating Home Rule and local zoning powers and which would more fairly distribute the responsibility of confronting Climate Change among all communities throughout the State instead of placing the entire burden on small rural communities.”

Although the proposed Scoping Plan contains phrases such as “community partnership” and states that “local governments are critical partners to the State,” it often cites home rule as a “risk/barrier to success”—i.e., something to be overcome. The Plan should recognize a municipality’s right to review and approve proposed climate related actions within its borders.

As noted by environmental advocates with Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc., “It is important that renewable energy implementation be locally led, not solely resting with the developers, utilities, counties or state, because local communities will be most affected by the siting, installation and operation of future facilities.” The Town cannot endorse projects whose scale and impact on rural character would be unacceptable in, by, and for our Town.

Willing and ready to be good partners, the Town of Ancram supports any NYS Scoping Plan explicitly stating that proposed actions affecting local landscapes and character will be executed only upon acceptance by the municipality in whose jurisdiction that project is proposed. New York State policy gets turned into programs and regulations. Will our Town or any Town be merely the recipient of those regulations, or also a full partner in their creation?

Arthur J. Bassin  
Supervisor