



# RENEWABLE CAPITOL ACT

**S8221 (Breslin) / A9341 (McDonald)**

**It's the law! New York must cut greenhouse gas emissions 40% by 2030** and 85% by 2050. However, as the climate crisis worsens, destroying communities and lives, not even close to enough has been done to meet the 2030 deadline which is just eight years away.

**New York's environmental justice policy states that:** *"No group of people, including a racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group, should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations."* However, the Governor and state legislators go to work every day in a building heated by the Sheridan Avenue Steam Plant (SASP) that has, for over 100 years polluted the environmental justice communities of Sheridan Hollow, and Arbor Hill just blocks away.

**The Renewable Capitol Act** requires that the Capitol, Empire State Plaza and other state buildings be run on 100% renewables within three years. Passage will:

- Eliminate greenhouse gas emissions from heating, cooling and providing electricity to state buildings in Albany and help New York meet its climate goals,
- Allow the Sheridan Avenue Steam Plant to be shut down, reducing toxic air emissions in Sheridan Hollow, Arbor Hill and other communities,
- Serve as a demonstration project for state agencies and private companies to show how renewable energy can meet our energy needs, and
- Showcase New York as a model for the nation and the world as to how to combat the climate crisis and build a sustainable energy future.

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## **RENEWABLE CAPITOL ACT S8221 (Breslin) / A9341 (McDonald)**

**Background:** In 2017, the New York Power Authority (NYPA) proposed installing two new fracked gas turbines on Sheridan Avenue in Albany to heat, cool and power the Capitol, Empire State Plaza and other government buildings in downtown Albany. Community members and climate activists formed the Sheridan Hollow Alliance for Renewable Energy (SHARE) to oppose the project. Due to the efforts of SHARE, the Legislature rejected the proposal in 2019 and authorized the \$88 million slated for the project to be used for renewable projects for the Capitol and Empire State Plaza. NYPA has initiated some renewable measures, including energy efficient lighting and switching a chiller to electricity, but much more is needed. **The Renewable Capitol Act is the next step in transitioning New York’s government buildings in downtown Albany to renewables and reducing pollution in the Sheridan Hollow, Arbor Hill, Center Square, West Hill, Mansion and South End neighborhoods in Albany.**

### **The bill requires development of a plan that must:**

- Be developed by the Office of General Services (OGS) with input from NYPA. It must be completed within six months after the law’s effective date,
- Include a timeline for planned steps towards the completion of the project,
- Include measures to maximize the benefits to the local community, including the reduction of pollution and improving health outcomes,
- Consider the feasibility of utilizing water from the nearby Hudson River for the geothermal component of the project, and
- Prioritize efforts that maximize the creation of quality jobs in New York State and in the surrounding community.

### **Project requirements:**

- Project must be completed within three years, and be constructed by OGS, with heavy involvement by NYPA.
- 100% of the heating and cooling must be done with renewables like solar, wind and geothermal.
- 100% of the electricity must also be from renewables (using a power purchase agreement until the electricity grid is 100% renewable).
- The Sheridan Avenue Steam Plant will be shut down and decommissioned.
- The project comply with, or exceed the greenhouse gas emissions schedule in the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA).
- The CLCPA’s “climate” and “equity” screens will apply to this project; i.e. the state must consider the impact on disadvantaged communities in designing the project and, greenhouse gas emissions must go down as a result of the project.