

Talking points on the NYSERDA Renewable Heating and Cooling Policy Framework

- 1. This is a great first step!** We are glad to see the Cuomo administration thinking comprehensively about how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions coming from heating and cooling our buildings. Thermal energy use in New York State's residential and commercial sector constitutes approximately 37% of statewide net energy consumption, and around 32% of New York State's energy-related, combustion-based greenhouse gas emissions. We must reduce fossil-fuel use in this sector in order to reach our climate goals.
- 2. We support the proposed \$15 million in customer rebates for geothermal systems.** The administration created the geothermal rebate program in recognition that the geothermal industry was facing a crisis as a federal tax credit expired in 2016. The resulting increases in cost for geothermal systems was a threat to geothermal jobs (of which there are about 1,000 in NY), and some firms faced closure altogether. It was also a threat to our climate progress. We thank the Governor for listening to the thousands of New Yorkers and the more than 150 organizations and businesses that called for a geothermal incentive in New York.
- 3. The policy framework should set a statewide goal of greenhouse gas reductions in the thermal energy sector.** In order to create a comprehensive strategy to support renewable heating and cooling, we need a goal to work toward. New York State has a goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 40% by 2030 and 80% by 2050, and the reductions for the thermal sector should be set to ensure that overall goal is reached. Then sector-specific strategies to meet the goal should be developed. This process should include an improvement to the state Greenhouse Gas inventory to account for the full life cycle climate impacts of methane.
- 4. The rebate program should be increased and expanded to include cold climate air source heat pumps and other renewable-ready heating technologies.** Geothermal systems are currently the most efficient and use the least amount of energy for heating and cooling, but they are not feasible for all buildings. Cold climate air source heat pumps should also receive incentives to bring down their costs for customers and spur adoption in situations where geothermal will not work. NYSERDA should increase the amount of the rebates available and design the rebate program to include cold climate air source heat pumps. NYSERDA should also set the rebate levels so that the most efficient systems receive the highest incentives.
- 5. NYSERDA should create programs to prioritize heat pump conversions for low-income households.** Low-income households struggle the most with the fluctuating costs of heating homes, and this has a high cost for those households and society at large. Supporting heat pump conversions for these households can reduce energy poverty and maximize the societal co-benefits that come along with heat pump adoption.
- 6. Gas expansion for home heating in New York can and should be stopped.** There are parts of the state that do not have gas service, and utilities are pushing to expand gas to those areas so that people can switch from expensive fuel oil and propane to cheaper (for now) natural gas. NY State policy supports this expansion, which has grave environmental implications. Instead of investing in expanding natural gas infrastructure, we should help people convert directly to renewable-ready heating sources.

Find the full framework document and information about where to send comments here:

www.renewableheatnow.org/comments