

Energy My View

This morning I challenged my family (Husband, Teens) to use 25% less energy than they normally would to see what it'll be like in New York when Indian Point closes and if we don't meet Governor Cuomo's target of 50% renewable energy by 2030. It's 1:40 PM and my hair is still damp and doesn't look all that tame. We did a load of laundry, in cold water of course, and hung it outside (1:41 PM and rain has begun). Charged our phones and computers to 75% and out the door. Husband and Teens carpooled, translate: everyone disgruntled. You get the picture. It's all doable but not easy or fun. We (my family, your family, my organization, your business) use a lot of energy each day, and not sparingly.

The Citizens Foundation has participated in recent energy discussions: Fracking, CPV and the Millennium Pipeline, Indian Point, community solar, wind, mass transit, walkability. We're perplexed by what we've seen and learned.

We don't understand why the Governor would call for 50% renewables by 2030 but not provide mass transit options on the newest Hudson River crossing. How can commuters decrease their fuel consumption without having reasonable transportation alternatives?

We don't understand why the NYSDEC won't allow Millennium Pipeline to hook up to CPV because their pipes will contain fracked gas when we know that a good portion of the gas our current utility companies provide us comes from fracking. We know that the Millennium Pipeline is regulated by the federal government, and as such, has no say in where or how they receive the gas they transfer.

We find it hard to believe that solar farms and community solar projects are held up because neighbors don't like the look of it and believe their own property/housing values will fall because of it. If not solar, then what? According to experts, wind energy won't work in Orange County and would be a major battle given our scenic beauty.

It seems like things are askew. Renewable energy is preferred, absolutely. There are few downsides to creating and using it. However, it's going to take time and commitment to develop and a lot of conservation and compromise if we're going to manage to do it by 2030, or ever.

We haven't yet seen a realistic blueprint on how renewables can power the world and by when. In the meantime, I'll commit to drying my hair only every other day, but what about the big questions? How are we going to transfer the energy we currently use between places; how are we really going to have an impact on fracking and how will we afford the energy we need if we don't use fracked gas; how can our population (30% commuter) get to work more efficiently; who is willing to house solar, who is making our policy decisions locally and how are they doing it? These are tough issues and we're stuck for the moment with protests and litigation, rather than doable solutions. We hope to start a more constructive conversation about these issues in 2018. Please participate. Contact us at info@occitizensfoundation.org.

