

**STATE OF NEW YORK
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

Proceeding on Motion of the Commission Assessing)	
Implementation of and Compliance with the)	Case 22-M-0149
Requirements and Targets of the Climate Leadership)	
and Community Protection Act)	
)	
)	
Proceeding to Implement a Large-Scale Renewable)	
Program and a Clean Energy Standard)	Case 15-E-0302

**COMMENTS OF NEW YORK SOLAR ENERGY INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION ON THE
PETITION OF THE COALITION FOR SAFE AND RELIABLE ENERGY**

Introduction

New York Solar Energy Industries Association (NYSEIA) submits these comments in response to the Petition filed by the Coalition for Safe and Reliable Energy (CSRE) seeking a hearing and potential suspension or modification of the Renewable Energy Program under Public Service Law § 66-p(4).

NYSEIA represents companies that develop, install, finance, and maintain distributed solar and energy storage projects across New York, including residential, commercial, and community scale systems. Our members operate almost entirely at the distribution level. They serve customers directly, reduce load where it is created, and deliver immediate bill relief and reliability value in communities throughout the state.

The Commission does not need the Petition to know that New York’s electric system is facing near-term challenges. Load is increasing, parts of the generation fleet are aging, and reliability margins are tightening. The question before the Commission is not whether these conditions exist, but how best to respond to them in a way that protects reliability and affordability.

NYSEIA strongly disagrees with CSRE’s unsubstantiated assertion that broad suspension or modification of the Renewable Energy Program is either necessary or prudent to address these challenges. A step of that magnitude would introduce market uncertainty, reduce energy infrastructure investment, and risk increasing costs for customers—without actually solving the near-term reliability issues the Petition highlights.

The better course is to focus on addressing barriers to clean, cost-effective capacity addition, with a particular emphasis on enabling resources that can be deployed quickly, reduce peak demand, and directly lower customer bills. Distributed solar paired with energy storage does exactly that. It is one of the most practical, near-term tools available to the Commission to support safe and adequate service while protecting affordability.

The Petition advances three related claims: that New York’s renewable energy programs impede the provision of safe and adequate electric service, impair existing system obligations, and contribute to rising customer arrears and service disconnections. These comments address each claim directly. As described below, distributed solar and energy storage do not trigger any of the conditions contemplated by Public

Service Law § 66-p(4). To the contrary, these resources reduce peak demand, ease localized system constraints, and lower customer bills—mitigating, rather than exacerbating, the challenges the Petition identifies.

The Petitioners bear the burden of demonstrating that renewable energy programs themselves impede the provision of safe and adequate service. It does not meet that burden.

The Petition's Reliability Claims Overlook Practical, Near-Term Solutions Already Available

The Petition argues that delays in large-scale renewable generation, combined with generator retirements and uncertainty around offshore wind, warrant extraordinary relief under § 66-p(4). That argument rests almost entirely on the assumption that bulk generation and transmission are the only tools capable of addressing reliability risk.

That assumption is wrong.

A significant share of reliability challenges in New York arise during peak system conditions, when constrained transmission, localized congestion, and high marginal costs collide. Distributed energy resources (DERs) operate precisely at those pressure points. Solar paired with batteries reduces net load during the most expensive and constrained hours, easing stress on both the bulk system and local distribution infrastructure. Standalone battery energy storage systems (BESS) are a similarly powerful tool to balance supply and demand, making the system more affordable and reliable while mitigating the need for polluting alternatives that are a threat to public health and safety.

Importantly, these resources can be deployed far more quickly than large centralized projects. While bulk generation and transmission investments are essential over the long term, they are unlikely to resolve near-term risks in the 2026–2030 window on their own. Distributed projects routinely move from development to operation on much shorter timelines, even under current interconnection limitations.

Unlike large centralized resources, distributed solar and storage do not require new transmission and they can actually defer the need for traditional transmission and distribution system expansion, lowering the cost of service for New York ratepayers.

An energy strategy that does not fully consider these benefits risks overstating the need to suspend existing programs while ignoring solutions that are already available. Treating reliability and renewable deployment as competing priorities creates a false dichotomy that does not reflect how DERs actually perform on the system, and ignores the fact that there is no credible lower-cost alternative to deploying clean energy to meet electric load growth.

Accordingly, the Petition's claim that New York's renewable energy programs are responsible for near-term reliability risk is not supported by how reliability challenges actually arise on the electric system or by the availability of deployable distributed solutions.

Affordability Is an Essential Component of Safe and Adequate Service

The Petition frames reliability largely in system-level terms, but affordability is inseparable from the Commission's obligation to ensure safe and adequate service. For customers, service becomes inadequate not only when the lights go out, but when bills become unpredictable or unaffordable.

New York’s recent experience makes this clear. Volatility in fossil fuel prices—particularly natural gas—has been a primary driver of sharp increases in wholesale electricity costs. Those costs flow directly through to customers, contributing to arrears, bill instability, and shutoffs.

Service cannot be considered safe and adequate when customers are disconnected because they cannot afford to pay their electric bills. Shutoffs are not merely a downstream equity concern; they represent a failure of the electric system to provide continuous service that customers can reasonably sustain. Efforts to address reliability that increase customer cost exposure risk worsening arrears and disconnections, undermining system adequacy from the customer’s perspective. By contrast, reducing and stabilizing customer bills is among the most effective forms of shutoff prevention. Distributed energy resources, particularly distributed solar and storage, function as shutoff-avoidance tools by lowering monthly bills, reducing exposure to fuel-driven price volatility, and providing more predictable energy costs over time.

Distributed solar paired with storage is therefore one of the few resources capable of directly and immediately mitigating this risk. It reduces system peaks that drive capacity costs. It dampens exposure to fuel price volatility. And in the case of community solar, it delivers bill credits that lower energy burdens for participating households, including low- and moderate-income customers.

Far from driving arrears or service disconnections, distributed solar programs are specifically designed to lower customer bills and stabilize monthly energy costs—outcomes that directly support the provision of safe and adequate service.

This is not merely a near-term observation. Independent system-level analysis has found that scaling distributed solar and achieving New York’s energy storage deployment goals yields substantial, recurring cost savings for customers. For example, a study by Synapse Energy Economics concluded that scaling distributed solar to 20 gigawatts by 2035, in combination with increased storage deployment, would save New Yorkers on the order of one billion dollars per year in avoided energy costs by reducing peak demand, driving down wholesale energy costs, and reducing reliance on high-cost generation.¹ These savings are additional to direct utility bill savings for participating customers and second order economic development and environmental benefits. These findings underscore that distributed solar paired with storage is not a cost driver, but a cost-containment tool that directly supports both affordability and system reliability.

From an affordability standpoint, these resources are not a future promise. They are working today, and they can scale further if regulatory and programmatic conditions allow.

The record therefore does not support the Petition’s assertion that renewable energy programs contribute to rising arrears or service disconnections; to the contrary, distributed solar reduces customer bills and promotes affordability.

Distributed Solar and Storage Strengthen Reliability Where It Matters Most

Distributed solar and storage contribute to reliability in ways that are fundamentally different from centralized generation. Because they are located closer to load, they reduce demand on constrained infrastructure and support service continuity during system stress events.

¹ Synapse Energy Economics (2026). *Sunlight and Storage into Savings: Evaluating Energy Cost Savings from Distributed Solar and Storage Additions in New York*. Prepared for the Coalition for Community Solar Access.

Storage, in particular, allows solar generation to be shifted to evening hours when demand is highest and wholesale prices peak. This pairing helps address the very conditions that drive reliability concerns and high system costs, without increasing reliance on scarcity-priced resources.

For communities facing growing demand—whether from new housing, electrification, or economic development—distributed resources can be deployed incrementally, aligned with actual load growth, rather than requiring large, lumpy investments that take years to materialize. Distributed solar and storage do not impair existing utility or system obligations. These resources support reliability by reducing net load and peak system stress, complementing—rather than complicating—existing planning, contracting, and operational arrangements.

This is not an argument against long-term planning. It is an argument for recognizing that distributed resources are among the most flexible and immediately available reliability tools the Commission has.

Nothing in the record demonstrates that distributed solar or energy storage impairs utilities' ability to meet existing obligations; the Petition offers no evidence to the contrary.

Suspending Renewable Energy Obligations Would Increase Long-Term Cost and Reliability Risk

The Petition suggests that suspending or modifying renewable energy obligations could preserve optionality for fossil-fuel generation as a reliability bridge. NYSEIA is concerned that this approach underestimates the long-term cost risk to ratepayers.

Extending reliance on gas-fired generation exposes customers to ongoing fuel price volatility and market uncertainty. By contrast, distributed solar and storage provide predictable costs over time and reduce exposure to fuel-driven price spikes.

Just as importantly, broad program suspension would create regulatory uncertainty at a moment when investment decisions are highly sensitive to signals from the Commission. Slowing deployment now would make future reliability and affordability challenges harder—not easier—to address.

Even if near-term reliability challenges warrant Commission attention, suspending renewable energy obligations is not a targeted or effective response to those challenges.

Existing Authority Is Sufficient to Address Reliability and Affordability Concerns

Taken together, the record does not support the Petition's contention that New York's renewable energy programs impede reliability, impair existing system obligations, or contribute to rising customer arrears or disconnections.

Public Service Law § 66-p(4) is meant to be a safety valve, not a reset button. It allows the Commission to suspend or modify renewable energy obligations only where doing so is necessary to ensure safe and adequate service. The Petition does not meet that standard. It points to real system challenges, but it does not show that New York's renewable energy programs are causing or worsening those challenges. In fact, the evidence points in the opposite direction.

Importantly, invoking § 66-p(4) would not meaningfully expand the Commission's ability to manage cost or reliability outcomes, because that authority already exists and is actively exercised through program design, procurement, and contract approval.

Distributed solar and storage reduce peak demand, ease localized system constraints, and limit customer exposure to volatile fuel prices during the very periods when reliability and affordability are most at risk. Additionally, the annual Large-Scale Renewables (LSR) procurements authorized by the Commission in the summer of 2025 do not obligate NYSERDA to enter into contracts for uneconomic resources; NYSERDA and the Commission have project-specific and procurement-specific discretion which allows them to advance cost-effective resources while rejecting resources that are too expensive.

Nothing in the Petition identifies a lower-cost or lower-risk alternative to clean energy procurement that would deliver equivalent reliability or affordability outcomes for ratepayers.

Where existing safeguards are already in place and proven, near-term clean energy solutions exist within the scope of the Commission's existing authority, invoking § 66-p(4) to suspend core programs is neither necessary nor justified. The Commission therefore should focus on deploying available solutions, not suspending the programs that make those solutions possible.

The Commission already has ample authority to respond to reliability and affordability concerns without invoking the extraordinary remedy contemplated by § 66-p(4).

Initiating a rehearing or program suspension under these circumstances would inject regulatory uncertainty into clean energy development while offering no corresponding benefit to customers, particularly where the Petition identifies no alternative path that would lower costs or reduce system risk.

Accelerating distributed solar and storage deployment, improving interconnection processes, and aligning distribution system planning with areas of load growth would all directly address the issues raised in the Petition.

The Commission is not starting from a blank slate in this regard. NYSEIA currently has a pending petition and comments before the Commission that identify specific, near-term actions to accelerate distributed solar and energy storage deployment while reducing costs to ratepayers. NYSEIA has petitioned the Commission to improve transparency and cost accountability under the Standardized Interconnection Requirements for distributed generation and energy storage projects five megawatts and below.² That petition documents how rapidly rising and unpredictable interconnection costs are causing otherwise viable projects to withdraw from the queue—capacity that could otherwise reduce peak demand, ease local reliability constraints, and lower system costs for all customers. Interconnection delays, utility cost increases, and overruns are not merely development challenges; they are chokepoints that prevent deployable, load-reducing capacity from coming online when the system most needs it. Addressing interconnection costs through a strengthened regulatory regime and embracing 21st Century technology to expand hosting capacity and reduce or eliminate avoidable costs would unlock near-term distributed capacity already poised to be built, directly supporting reliability and affordability objectives without suspending or modifying existing statutory obligations.

Additionally, the Commission could increase clean energy supply by advancing the DPS Staff Proposal in the Value of Distributed Energy Resources (VDER) proceeding that was filed in December 2025. This proposal would update the VDER rate to more accurately account for DERs' unique ability to defer

² *Petition of New York Solar Energy Industries Association Seeking Modifications to the New York State Standardized Interconnection Requirements to Provide Greater Transparency and Cost Certainty for New Distributed Generators and/or Energy Storage Systems 5 MW or Less Connected in Parallel with Utility Distribution Systems*, Case 24-E-0621 (NY PSC filed Feb. 14, 2025)

traditional infrastructure expansion projects that would otherwise be borne by ratepayers for the first time in nearly a decade. These are a few of the readily available solutions that will enable New York to scale up clean energy supply to meet electric load growth. If the Commission determines that further inquiry is warranted, that inquiry should be narrowly focused on targeted deployment and interconnection reforms—not on suspending statutory programs that mitigate the very risks identified in the petition. The evidence does not support the conclusion that such suspension is necessary to maintain safe and adequate service.

Conclusion

NYSEIA urges the Commission to deny the Coalition’s request to suspend or modify the Renewable Energy Program under Public Service Law § 66-p(4).

New York’s electric system is facing real and near-term challenges. But responding to those challenges does not require stepping back from programs that stabilize bills, reduce peak system stress, and can be deployed quickly today. Distributed solar paired with energy storage does exactly that. These resources are operating now, delivering benefits where they matter most, and they can scale further if regulatory and programmatic barriers are addressed.

The path forward is not to slow progress or introduce uncertainty, but to focus deployment on solutions that are already proven, already cost-effective, and already reducing risk for ratepayers. Distributed solar and energy storage are integral to ensuring safe, adequate, and affordable electric service in New York, and nothing in this record supports suspending the programs that enable their deployment.

For questions, comments, or follow up, please contact:

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