



Minutes – Friday, June 27, 2025
Video Conference
9 am to 11 am

Attending: Marie McRae, Brian Eden, Irene Weiser, Dan Lamb, Dave Bradley, George Lorefice, Gerrie Wiley, Guillermo Metz, Hailey Delisle, Jennifer Tavares, Leon Porter, Nick Goldsmith, Paul Moore, Ray Burger, Sarah Carson, Sheila Out, Terry Carroll, Tobias Harrath, Margaret McCasland, Pete Wirth, Tom Hoebbel, Ferdinand de Aragon, Gretchen Worth, Tom Hirasuna, Margaret Johnson, Chuck Geisler, Anna Kelles, Peter Bardaglio

Agenda

Roundtable Discussion – All

It's been a while since we've had a full-fledged roundtable session. There's lots going on, both good and not so good, and as we move into the summer it's perhaps an appropriate time to take stock. Come prepared to discuss the following questions:

- 1) What do you see as the best opportunities for making a difference when it comes to possible climate actions at the local, state, and national levels?*
- 2) What are the biggest challenges we face in moving the energy transition forward? How can we best address these challenges?*
- 3) What is your main source of hope for protecting the climate and preventing runaway global warming? What is your biggest source of anxiety and concern?*

NYS Climate and Clean Energy Legislation: The Road Ahead – Anna Kelles

Assemblymember Anna Kelles (D-125) has been an outstanding champion for climate and clean energy issues, representing Cortland and Tompkins Counties. Dr. Kelles will provide her perspective on the legislative session just concluded and possible next steps.

Overview

The meeting discussed the challenges and strategies for addressing climate change and energy transition. Key points included the need for a political, not just economic, solution to climate issues, emphasizing the importance of local and personal actions. The conversation highlighted the ineffectiveness of current messaging, suggesting a shift towards affordability and energy reliability. Assemblymember Anna Kelles stressed the importance of revamping the New York Heat Act to focus on energy affordability and the need for better communication, and she discussed the importance of the Build Public Renewables Act. The discussion also touched on the role of local governments and the impact of rising sea levels on migration and conflict. Other discussion focused on the challenges and strategies for addressing energy and environmental issues. Brian Eden emphasized the high cost and long timeline of nuclear power, citing a \$2 billion increase in Georgia. He advocated for immediate solutions like solar and wind, highlighting the need for better messaging to make these options more appealing. The conversation also touched on the impact of packaging on landfill space, with Brian noting that New York has

15-25 years left of landfill space. He stressed the importance of effective messaging to influence public perception and policy, particularly in urban and low-income communities.

Action Items

- Explore ways to connect the issue of climate change to personal health and economic impacts at the local level.
- Investigate opportunities to integrate climate-friendly practices (e.g., diet changes, home weatherization) into personal lifestyles and local government decision-making.
- Continue discussions on how to effectively communicate the urgency of climate action in a positive and engaging manner, particularly to reach younger generations.

Roundtable Discussion on Climate and Energy Transition

- Peter welcomes everyone and introduced the morning's agenda, including a roundtable discussion and a session with Assemblymember Anna Kelles.
- He expresses concern about the tough climate and energy transition situations, mentioning the governor's different vision.
- He asks participants to reflect on their main hopes for protecting the climate and preventing runaway climate change.
- Leon Porter emphasizes that every bit of global warming reduction helps and that it's not an all-or-nothing proposition.

Challenges and Solutions in Climate Action

- Dave Bradley argues that the climate problem is a political problem, not an engineering or economic one, and criticizes the focus on nuclear power.
- He suggests debating the merits of nuclear power and highlights the high costs and risks associated with it.
- Peter and Dave discuss the political dynamics in New York, particularly the opposition to wind turbines and the influence of the methane and nuclear industries.
- Dave points out the high costs of renewable energy in New York due to the need for storage and the lack of fixed electricity prices.

Focusing on Local and Personal Actions

- Marie McRae shifts the discussion to the food system, mentioning the impact of climate change on crops and the need to focus on local food systems.
- Peter agrees and highlights the importance of developing a resilient, sustainable local food system.
- Brian Eden discusses the need to communicate the urgency of climate change in a way that resonates with people, beyond doom-saying.
- Tom Hirasuna mentions the importance of addressing affordability and other fundamental issues to get people engaged in climate action.

Effective Communication and Strategies

- Peter and Tom discuss the need for positive and engaging leadership to motivate people to act on climate issues.
- Dan Lamb emphasizes the importance of personal actions and local government initiatives in addressing climate change.
- He suggests starting with personal choices, such as diet and transportation, to build a movement at the local level.

- Peter highlights the importance of engaging young people and multi-generational participation in climate action.

Challenges of Climate Legislation

- AM Kelles discusses the challenges of passing climate legislation, particularly the resistance to cost and regulation.
- She emphasizes the need to rethink messaging and focus on affordability and energy reliability.
- She explains the importance of the 100-foot rule and the need for a revamped New York Heat Act.
- She highlights the importance of the Sustainable Futures Fund and the need for better coordination between NYSERDA and HCR.

Implementing the Build Public Renewables Act (BPRA)

- AM Kelles discusses the potential of the BPRA to deploy significant renewable energy capacity in New York.
- She criticizes the governor's delay in implementing the BPRA and the need to push for its implementation.
- She emphasizes the importance of addressing the role of NYPA and other utilities in implementing the BPRA.
- She highlights the need for better communication and messaging to build support for the BPRA.

Affordability and Energy Transition

- AM Kelles explains the cost savings of electrifying homes and the need to communicate this effectively.
- She discusses the importance of addressing the maintenance costs of natural gas infrastructure.
- She emphasizes the need for a transition plan that involves local municipalities and utilities.
- She highlights the importance of focusing on affordability and energy reliability in messaging and legislation.

Strategies for Climate Action

- AM Kelles suggests focusing on energy affordability and the benefits of renewable energy infrastructure.
- She emphasizes the need for a multi-faceted approach that includes local government initiatives and personal actions.
- She highlights the importance of addressing the political and economic dynamics of climate action.
- She suggests rethinking messaging and focusing on solutions that address immediate concerns and build support for long-term climate action.

Energy Crisis and Ratepayer Burden

- Brian emphasizes the bottleneck in their strategy, focusing on the cost to ratepayers.
- Discussion about the high cost of building nuclear plants, citing a recent \$2 billion increase in Georgia.

- AM Kelles argues against waiting 10 years for energy solutions, comparing it to housing issues.
- Emphasis on the need for immediate solutions and the high cost of inaction.

Focus on Utility-Scale Solar and Wind

- Peter suggests focusing on siting utility-scale solar and wind energy solutions.
- Brian argues against jumping to solutions without addressing the cost and impact on ratepayers.
- Discussion about the affordability and immediate benefits of solar and wind energy.
- Brian highlights the need for better messaging and public acceptance of renewable energy solutions.

Challenges in Solar and Wind Energy

- Brian discusses the challenges of siting solar on agricultural land and promoting agrivoltaics.
- AM Kelles criticizes the negative messaging around wind energy, such as noise and health concerns.
- Emphasis on the need for positive messaging and public education about the benefits of renewable energy.
- Discussion about the importance of public engagement and participation in energy solutions.

Impact of Nuclear Power Plants

- Brian discusses the high cost and abandonment of nuclear power plants due to expense.
- Emphasis on the need for affordable and immediate energy solutions.
- Discussion about the impact of nuclear power plants on disadvantaged communities.
- Brian highlights the influence of big tech companies like Amazon and Facebook on pushing for modular nuclear power plants.

Importance of Messaging and Public Engagement

- Pete Wirth agrees on the importance of messaging and public engagement in energy solutions.
- Discussion on the need for better representation at public hearings and meetings.
- Brian emphasizes the importance of showing up to support renewable energy solutions.
- Emphasis on the need for effective messaging to win public support for renewable energy.

Packaging and Waste Management

- Brian discusses the challenges of packaging legislation and the need for better messaging.
- Emphasis on the economic benefits of reducing packaging and landfill space.
- Discussion on the impact of packaging on low-income communities and the environment.
- Brian highlights the need for statewide groups to focus on marketing and messaging in low-income communities.

Corporate Influence on Packaging

- Brian discusses the influence of oil and gas companies on packaging and waste management.
- Emphasis on the need to address the root causes of excessive packaging.

- Discussion on the economic benefits of reducing packaging and landfill space.
- Brian highlights the need for better messaging to address corporate influence on packaging.

Economic and Environmental Impact of Packaging

- Brian discusses the economic and environmental impact of excessive packaging.
- Emphasis on the need for better messaging to address the economic burden of packaging.
- Discussion about the impact of packaging on low-income communities and the environment.
- Brian highlights the need for statewide groups to focus on marketing and messaging in low-income communities.

Effective Messaging Strategies

- Brian discusses the importance of effective messaging strategies in energy and waste management.
- Emphasis on the need for powerful and compelling messaging to win public support.
- Discussion about the impact of messaging on public perception and behavior.
- Brian highlights the need for better messaging to address corporate influence on packaging.

Final Thoughts and Recommendations

- Brian emphasizes the importance of effective messaging and public engagement in energy and waste management.
- Discussion about the need for better representation at public hearings and meetings.
- Emphasis on the importance of addressing the root causes of excessive packaging and landfill space.
- Brian highlights the need for statewide groups to focus on marketing and messaging in low-income communities.