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Oppose Tampering with New York's Measurements of Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Memo of Opposition to S.6030 (Parker)

S.6030 amends the environmental conservation law and the public service law, dangerously undermining a core tenet of the state's landmark climate law, the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA).

Food & Water Watch strongly opposes this legislation. S.6030 is a gift to the fracked gas industry. Changing the 20-year accounting standard used to calculate the "carbon dioxide equivalent" greenhouse gases in the CLCPA will prolong the state's reliance on fracked gas and doom New York to fail to achieve the emissions reductions enshrined into the law.

We must protect the 20-year accounting standard in the CLCPA. The state's climate law requires that "carbon dioxide equivalent" of a greenhouse gas other than carbon dioxide be calculated by measuring the amount of carbon dioxide by mass that would produce the same global warming impact of a given mass of another greenhouse gas over an integrated 20-year time frame after emission.

The 20-year accounting standard is particularly important for measuring methane emissions because methane is extraordinarily efficient at trapping heat during the first 20 years after its release into the environment. For this reason and the fact that methane is responsible for 20% of the state's emissions, the state's Climate Action Council has repeatedly and strongly emphasized the importance of accurately measuring the greenhouse gas emissions of methane. Indeed, New York's Scoping Plan, recently adopted after three years of extensive stakeholder engagement and input, is based on the stringent accounting standards established in the CLCPA.

There is no compelling policy reason to change the way the state calculates greenhouse gas emissions.

New Yorkers are already struggling with the drastic effects of climate change, so shifting to a 100-year timescale to measure emissions is frankly absurd. While this bill may appear to be a technical change to harmonize with efforts at the federal level, the impact of enacting it would be enormously detrimental. We must not let the fossil fuel industry gut New York's bedrock climate law.

Food & Water Watch strongly opposes this legislation. S.6030 is nothing less than an attempt to destroy the core principles of the CLCPA. Climate delay is the new climate denial, and we must reject it in all its forms.