

# Susquehanna *Sierran* September 2022



Founded 1892

EXPLORE, ENJOY, PROTECT THE PLANET

## **Bluestone Wind Update** – Scott Lauffer

The Bluestone Wind project in the Towns of Windsor and Sanford is on track to be operational by year's end. Northland Power is the developer. Project Development Manager Chris Stanton described the project in February to the Susquehanna Group. Many wind turbines are visible from Rte 17 as they tower from hills. The construction phase no doubt causes difficulties for resident humans and animals. When complete, 26 turbines will generate 112 megawatts. The project was submitted in 2016 to the NYS Public Services Commission and included sections on wildlife protection, natural resources, visual character, and other commonly-litigated issues. NYS subsequently created the Office of Renewable Energy Siting (ORES), intended to streamline renewable energy projects. Bluestone is one of 120 ongoing large-scale renewable energy projects across New York. Wind and solar produce little climate-changing CO<sub>2</sub>, but require much more land than fossil-fuel power plants. Bluestone will require 5662 total acres including 313 acres of forest, thereby endangering some resident and migratory bald and golden eagles. This is one of the costs for New York to generate 70% of its electricity from renewables by 2030. The Sierra Club supports this energy goal.



*Newly-installed, not yet operational turbine, Town of Windsor. photo Scott Lauffer*



*Pollinator Garden at Confluence Park, Binghamton, after the devastatingly heavy snow of April 19. The City's Parks & Recreation Department and Susquehanna Group restored the garden. The historic site, easy and enjoyable to visit, is a favorite of bees, wasps, butterflies, moths, birds and humans. Sometimes beavers visit but they are rather poor pollinators.*

*To volunteer with this project contact Sarah Hodder at [shaddow@stny.rr.com](mailto:shaddow@stny.rr.com).*

# Despair to Hope on Climate Action – Valdi Weiderpass

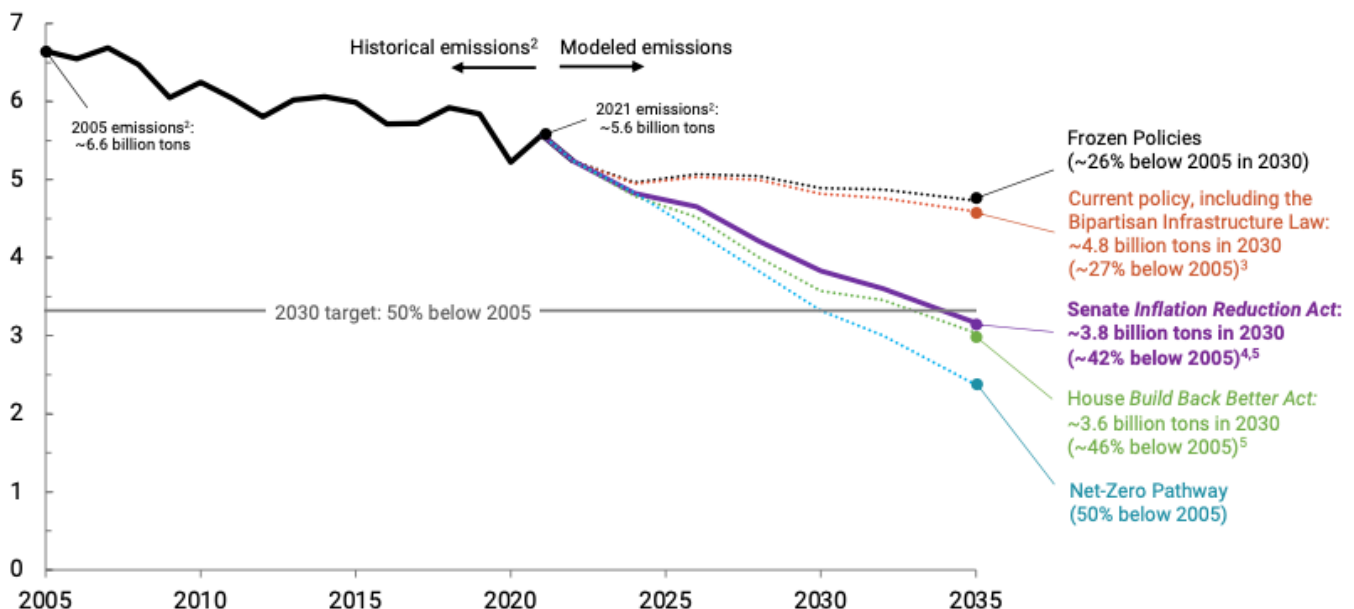
When President Biden on August 16 signed the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA) U.S. climate action began to inspire hope! A month earlier chances to pass a climate bill in the Senate seemed dead, and that substantial federal climate legislation might have to await future elections. There could be delays of 2, 4, 6 or even 10 years, depending on control of the Senate, House and Presidency. However, after a year and a half of failed negotiations WV Senator Manchin and Senate Majority Leader Schumer secretly re-started them and in late July reached agreement on the IRA. We can now hope our nation can do its part to help save a habitable climate.

The IRA will dedicate almost \$375 billion to climate action over 10 years including:

- \$7,500 tax rebate at sale for purchase of new Electric Vehicle (EV)
- \$4,000 tax rebate for purchase of used EV
- 30% tax credit for installation of solar panels and/or battery energy storage on your property
- \$8,000 rebate for efficient heat pumps to heat/cool homes with \$1,750 for water heating
- Smaller rebates for purchase of electric clothes dryers and efficient induction stovetop cookers
- Tax credits covering 30% of the cost of home improvements to reduce heat leakage, such as upgraded windows and doors, with a \$1,600 rebate to insulate/seal a house, and a \$2,500 tax break for improvements to electrical wiring.
- \$36.9 billion incentives for individuals, extends/increases credits for energy-efficient properties
- \$37 billion for clean energy manufacturing tax credits to manufacture in USA
- \$62.7 billion in new tax credits for wind, solar, geothermal energy, advanced nuclear and energy storage
- \$51 billion to extend existing tax credits for wind and solar power
- \$30 billion in tax credits to help keep existing nuclear electricity generating plants open
- \$20 billion for 'Green Bank' to invest in clean energy projects, especially for poor communities
- \$16.7 billion for agriculture to improve soil carbon, reduce nitrogen loss, reduce emissions
- Fees and incentives to reduce methane emissions from oil and gas production
- \$4 billion to address the western U.S. mega-drought, including water conservation for the Colorado River basin

Unfortunately, the IRA contains giveaways to the fossil fuel industry such as requiring new leasing and supporting carbon capture and storage. Also, the bill is estimated to reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by only about 40% instead of the 50% President Biden wanted for the Paris Climate commitment. We must push for more climate action and limit fossil fuel infrastructure expansion at federal, state and local levels!

*graphic: Repeat Project of Princeton University Zero Lab*



## Susquehanna Group

(All of Broome, Sullivan & most of Chenango,  
Delaware, Otsego, Tioga Counties)

|                        |                              |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| Chair                  | *Valdi Weiderpass            |
| Vice Chair             | *Scott Lauffer               |
| Secretary              | *Karen Boba                  |
| Treasurer              | *Joann Lettis                |
| Political Chair        | *Scott Lauffer               |
| Chapter Delegate       | *Jim Taft                    |
| Newsletter Editor      | *Jim Taft                    |
| Membership Chair       | *Chris Harasta               |
| Outings Chair          | *Chris Harasta               |
| Conservation Co-Chairs | *Doug Gausman, Mary Cronk    |
| Alt. Chapter Delegate  | *Joann Lettis                |
|                        | * Member Executive Committee |

To become a candidate for the  
Susquehanna Group's Executive  
Committee, mail by November 1, 2022  
a candidate statement of 150 words or  
less to:

Susquehanna Group  
PO Box 572  
Endicott NY 13760

The Nominating Committee will create  
a slate of candidates, and ballots will be  
mailed with the December *Sierran*.

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## COMING EVENTS

**Note:** Member meetings during the pandemic continue online. To join a meeting use the Zoom app or website. Enter Zoom meeting number 364 466 5286.

### General Membership Meetings

September 20, 7:30pm **Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo** (NY 123rd Assembly District) will discuss legislative priorities and answer questions about current legislation and possible new bills.

October 18, 7:30pm. **My Electric Vehicle** Three EV (Tesla, Ford, Chevrolet) owners will discuss their personal EV experiences. Chris Burger, Jack Davis, Lawrence Blumberg.

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## Like to Influence Government Policy?

– Shay O'Reilly (National Sierra Club staffer in NYS)

Love to write? Love getting our message out? Join the NY State Media Team! This team writes and submits letters to papers across the state, with over 1100 published since 2015 calling on the governor and other elected officials to take action on Sierra Club priorities. We can always use more people submitting letters to the editor, and we can even help you write! Contact Stephanie Doba to link up: [stephanie.doba@gmail.com](mailto:stephanie.doba@gmail.com)

# Large-Scale Renewable Energy Projects in New York

– Jim Taft

Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter's Energy Committee is chaired by Bob Ciesielski of the Rochester Group. The Energy Committee's Large Scale Renewable Assessment Subcommittee is led by Jeff Schumann of the Lower Hudson Group. Jeff has maintained a list of current large-scale renewable energy projects as they are proposed, permitted, and developed. The following is adapted from his more comprehensive spreadsheet.

## Current Large-Scale Renewable Projects – NYS

| PROJECT         | ORES #   | SIZE  | TYPE  | COUNTY             | SC GROUP           | ORES STATUS        |
|-----------------|----------|-------|-------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Heritage        | 21-00026 | 184MW | wind  | Orleans            | Rochester          | Approved           |
| Morris Ridge    | 21-00025 | 177MW | solar | Livingston         | Rochester          | Approved           |
| Riverhead 2     | 21-00024 | 36MW  | solar | Nassau             | Long Island        | Approved           |
| Watkins Glen    | 21-01069 | 50MW  | solar | Schuyler           | Finger Lakes       | Approved           |
| Cider           | 21-01108 | 500MW | solar | Genesee            | Niagara            | Siting Approved    |
| Alder Creek     |          | 205MW | solar | Oneida             | Central Northern   | Pending            |
| Bear Ridge      | 21-02104 | 100MW | solar | Niagara, Genesee   | Niagara            | App Complete       |
| Green Corners   | 21-00982 | 200MW | solar | Jefferson          | Central Northern   | Draft Permit       |
| Hemlock Ridge   | 21-00748 | 200MW | solar | Orleans            | Niagara, Rochester | Draft Permit       |
| Homer           | 21-02480 | 180MW | solar | Cortland           | Finger Lakes       | Draft Permit       |
| Horseshoe       | 21-02480 | 180MW | solar | Livingston, Monroe | Rochester          | Draft Permit       |
| Riverside       | 21-00752 | 100MW | solar | Jefferson          | Central Northern   | App Complete       |
| South Ripley    | 21-00750 | 270MW | solar | Chautauqua         | Niagara            | Draft Permit       |
| Bluestone       |          | 112MW | wind  | Broome             | Susquehanna        | Under Construction |
| Columbia Energy |          | 350MW | solar | Herkimer           | Central Northern   | Pending            |
| Empire          |          | 125MW | solar | Chautauqua         | Niagara            | Pending            |
| Genesee Road    |          | 250MW | solar | Erie               | Niagara            | Pending            |
| High Bridge     |          | 100MW | wind  | Chenango           | Susquehanna        |                    |
| Mill Point      |          | 250MW | solar | Montgomery         | Hudson-Mohawk      | App in Process     |
| Moraine         | 22-00024 | 94MW  | solar | Allegany           | Finger Lakes       | App Incomplete     |
| New Bremen      |          | 240MW | solar | Lewis              | Central Northern   | Pending Review     |
| Rich Road       |          | 240MW | solar | St Lawrence        | Central Northern   | Pending Review     |
| Shepherds Run   | 21-02553 | 60MW  | solar | Columbia           | Mid-Hudson         | App Incomplete     |
| Sugar Maple     |          | 125MW | solar | Jefferson, Lewis   | Central Northern   | Pending Review     |
| Verona          |          | 205MW | solar | Oneida             | Central Northern   | Pending Review     |
| White Creek     |          | 135MW | solar | Livingston         | Rochester          | Pending Review     |
| Brookside       | 21-00917 | 100MW | solar | Franklin           | Hudson-Mohawk      | App Incomplete     |
| Prattsburgh     | 21-00749 | 147MW | wind  | Steuben            | Finger Lakes       | App Pending        |

# Protect Our Ballots Act A.1115C

– Scott Lauffer



This NY Assembly bill would improve election security by requiring that voting machines certified by the State Board of Elections be constructed so that it is impossible for additional marks to be added to the ballot once it has been cast by a voter.

Computerized intrusion into the machines we rely on has become a threat requiring us to take measures to protect accurate vote-counting. Since 2006, New York has used paper ballots which are hand marked by the voter and fed into standalone scanners for counting. This creates a paper trail that can

be audited to check the accuracy of the machine count. Security experts recommend ballot scanners that are completely separate from ballot-markers and printers. When these functions are combined marks can be made on the ballot after the voter has cast it, potentially changing or invalidating the vote. However, New York State Board of Elections has already approved one voting machine, called a hybrid or all-in-one, that combines these functions. The Board may soon approve another hybrid voting machine. Security experts recommend these voting machines be banned.

The U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency reported that flaws in Dominion voting machines have not been exploited, including in the 2020 election. Yet since deficiencies exist, proposed federal legislation includes language banning hybrid machines nationwide. Examples of these machines are at <https://images.app.goo.gl/U24gdz4AvmaJHscG6>. In New York State, at least 28 counties already use hybrid machines. This means that there are approximately 1.3 million NY voters who could use machines that due to their design are vulnerable to hacking.

The NY Senate version passed its version of the bill but the Assembly version did not get out of the Committee on Election Law. Assembly member Donna Lupardo supports A.1115C. If your Assembly member does not, urge him/her to do so as the integrity of voting is critical to our democracy.

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## Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) Update – Douglas Gausman

Winter 2021-2022 brought highs and lows for hemlock conservation in New York. Forty-two new towns were added to New York's infestation map. This was partially due to mild winter weather though some sites reported high HWA mortality in January when temperatures dropped. This suggests that HWA populations will be patchy across the state through 2022.

On the plus side, Cornell University/NYS Hemlock Initiative reported that HWA infested foliage obtained from Washington and California was used to rear silver flies and *Laricobius* beetles for HWA bio-control. The rearing process was successful. Silver flies were released at eleven sites in early spring. The beetles are incubating in soil tubs and will be released from October to December.

A returning threat to hemlocks was found at several sites. Our old friend, the *gypsy moth* caterpillar, has reemerged and is eating hemlock needles. They have been renamed *spongy moths*.



## CALENDAR TIME !

### Goodbye 2022 !

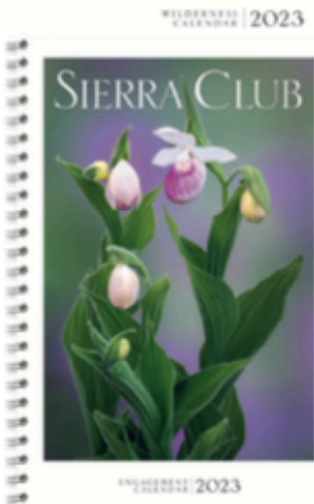
Please pre-order calendars and we'll mail them to you when they come in. This is a small fundraiser for Susquehanna Group.

\$15 each for either Wall or Engagement size.

Orders must be received by October 31, 2022.

Mail order form and payment by check to the address below.

Questions? Contact Treasurer Joann Lettis at [jomom83589@aol.com](mailto:jomom83589@aol.com).



| Calendar Type    | Each    | Quantity | Cost                 |
|------------------|---------|----------|----------------------|
| Wall             | \$15.00 |          |                      |
| Engagement       | \$15.00 |          |                      |
| Shipping         |         |          | \$5.00               |
| <b>TOTAL DUE</b> |         |          | <input type="text"/> |

Ship to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street/PO Box \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to: Sierra Club Susquehanna Group

Mail to: Sierra Club Susquehanna Group

PO Box 572

Endicott NY 13760

Next issue of the *Sierran* will be a mailed hard copy in December 2022, and will include election and voting materials for positions on the Susquehanna Group Executive Committee. Instructions for potential candidates are on page 3 of this issue.



Susquehanna Group

PO Box 572

Endicott NY 13760

<https://www.sierraclub.org/atlantic/susquehanna>