

PSC Resolution in Support of Public Power

- Whereas, the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the overwhelming majority of climate scientists have stated that current concentrations and ongoing emissions of greenhouse gases will transcend generations by causing increases in global temperatures, warming of the world's oceans and rising average sea level for many centuries, and irreversible changes in major ecosystems; and
- Whereas, the burning of fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas for the purposes of electricity generation and transportation is the primary source of climate changing greenhouse gas emissions; and
- Whereas, working families, frontline communities, communities of color and low income communities and other vulnerable populations, including and especially our students and their families, suffer disproportionately from environmental degradation and climate change events such as extreme hurricanes, wildfire, drought and flooding, extreme heat and the spread of infectious disease; and,
- Whereas, widespread social analyses (e.g. Naomi Klein's *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs the Climate*) clearly articulate the dangers to all of failing to rapidly curb the use of fossil fuels as well as the increased risks to those living close to rising sea levels; and,
- Whereas, the PSC and the AFT have supported the Green New Deal and rapid decarbonization and both the Green New Deal and THRIVE platforms call for rapid decarbonization; and
- Whereas, Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (the PSC is a member organization) has shown that markets have proven unable to create a sufficiently rapid transition towards a low carbon economy, thereby necessitating a strong role for the public sector and democratic control in driving the measures needed to undertake this transition; and,
- Whereas, in New York State, Con Edison and other investor-owned utilities deliver profits to shareholders, thus requiring rates above cost, while delaying the transition to clean energy and accepting the necessity of inequitable brownouts to vulnerable populations in response to its inability to manage demand or its own infrastructure; and
- Whereas, NYPA is the largest publicly owned utility in the country, with a track record of providing the most affordable energy in the state (including as the exclusive electricity provider to CUNY campuses), it makes sense for NYPA to be at the forefront of our renewable energy transformation, though under current law, NYPA cannot own or build new utility-scale renewable generation projects; and
- Whereas, the Public Power NY Coalition, has proposed that NYPA (the New York Power Authority) and new public utilities can and should generate, transmit and distribute to New York the 100% renewable, democratically controlled, publicly owned energy system it needs, therefore,

Be it resolved that:

- The PSC shall support efforts for public ownership of utilities in New York State and New York City, bringing New York the 100% renewable, democratically controlled, publicly owned energy system it needs.
- The PSC shall join the Public Power NY Coalition to bring the New York State energy system into public ownership and democratic control.

- The PSC shall network with other NYSUT chapters to build support for public power and shall encourage NYSUT to formally support this campaign.
- The PSC shall include support for public power in its electoral questionnaires and advocate supportive positions in upcoming candidate endorsements.
- The PSC shall encourage NYSUT to also support Public Power and inform its locals how public power will facilitate achieving renewable energy goals for NYS.

Sources:

- Ashley Dawson, “[Public Power in a Green City](#),” *Jacobin* (October 25, 2020)
- Jackson Koeppel, Johanna Bozuwa, and Liz Veazey, “[Community Ownership of Power Administration](#),” *Solidarity, The Next System, and We Own It* (January 29, 2020)
- Jumaane Williams, “[Municipalizing New York City's Electric Grid](#),” Office of the New York City Public Advocate (August 7, 2020)
- Sean Sweeney and John Treat, “[Energy Transition: Are We Winning?](#)” *Trade Unions for Energy Democracy* (January 2017)
- Sean Sweeney, Kylie Benton-Connell, and Lara Skinner, “[Power to the People: Toward Democratic Control of Energy Generation](#)”, *Trade Unions for Energy Democracy* (June 2015)

Notes:

- Public Power Coalition: <https://www.nypublicpower.com/our-partners/>
- Existing NY Public Service Commission information: <https://www.ny.gov/agencies/department-public-service>