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**Groups oppose switching NY plant from coal to gas**

By: Mary Esch

November 14, 2013

[http://online.wsj.com/article/AP37275691611b44ba83bbeda4d63725f2.html?mod=WSJ\\_NY\\_LEFTAPHeadlines](http://online.wsj.com/article/AP37275691611b44ba83bbeda4d63725f2.html?mod=WSJ_NY_LEFTAPHeadlines)

ALBANY, N.Y. — A group of central and western New York officials and utility ratepayers presented a letter to Gov. Andrew Cuomo's office Thursday outlining their opposition to a proposal to convert an unprofitable old coal-burning power plant in Tompkins County to natural gas.

The group supports an alternate proposal to mothball the 300 megawatt Cayuga generating station and make up for the lost generating power through upgrades to the transmission grid, which would cost ratepayers less and establish needed infrastructure for renewable energy sources such as wind, solar and hydroelectricity.

The proposal to convert the plant is before the utility-regulating Public Service Commission.

"As Governor Cuomo defines his new energy policy, the PSC must not miss this opportunity to start us out on the right path to protect ratepayers, the environment, and future generations," said Tompkins County legislator Carol Chock, speaking for the Ratepayer and Community Intervenor group, which includes residents and officials from an eight-county region.

The governor's office hadn't reviewed the letter Thursday afternoon and had no immediate comment.

The group, which is represented before the Public Service Commission by the environmental group Earthjustice, views the Cayuga decision as precedent-setting as other coal-fired plants in the state consider switching to natural gas, a nationwide trend that has been fueled partly by the huge surge in supply due to advances in shale gas extraction using hydraulic fracturing.

The Public Service Commission may make a decision as early as next month. The agency will choose between a transmission upgrade proposed by New York State Electric & Gas and four options for repowering the plant with natural gas, which is cleaner-burning and currently less expensive than coal.

"We believe we can produce the power more economically, more efficiently, and way more environmentally friendly by switching to natural gas," said Jerry Goodenough, chief operating officer of Cayuga Operating Co., the plant's owner.

The PSC is also considering a similar proposal by another power producer, NRG Energy, to convert its coal-fired plant along Lake Erie in the Chautauqua County city of Dunkirk to natural gas. National Grid has made an alternate proposal to upgrade the region's transmission system and mothball the Dunkirk plan.

A group of independent power producers that operate 13 natural gas plants across upstate New York opposes converting the Dunkirk and Cayuga plants from coal to natural gas, saying there's already 2,000 megawatts of excess capacity in the region.

Earthjustice and other environmental groups support upgrading the transmission grid to more efficiently deliver electricity from existing plants to consumers, rather than switching outdated plants from one fossil fuel to another.

## **Tompkins County lawmakers, ratepayers push against power plant plans**

By: Jon Campbell

November 14, 2013

<http://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/VoteUp/2013/11/14/tompkins-county-lawmakers-ratepayers-push-against-power-plant-plans/3539539/>

Local lawmakers from Tompkins County were part of a group of two dozen at the Capitol on Thursday calling on the state to reject a plan to re-power a pair of aging coal plants with natural gas.

The group -- known as the Ratepayer and Community Intervenors -- delivered a letter to Gov. Andrew Cuomo, urging him to support a plan that would upgrade transmission lines rather than allow the Cayuga Power Plant in Lansing, Tompkins County, and NRG Energy plant in Dunkirk, Chautauqua County, to make the switch to gas.

"Let's get New York state on the right lane, the one that leads to a truly renewable future," said Carol Chock, a Tompkins County legislator from Ithaca who is an organizer of the group. "Let's make New York state the green economic powerhouse of the nation."

The state Public Service Commission in recent months has been weighing proposals from the Lansing and Dunkirk plants that could set a precedent for other coal-fired power facilities that are nearing the end of their life cycle and have become uneconomical as the price of natural gas has fallen. New York State Electric & Gas, however, originally proposed a plan that would upgrade power lines instead.

Earlier this week, the commission issued a two-week extension for NYSEG and the Cayuga plant's owners to come together on a compromise plan. The two sides now have until Nov. 21 to come up with a way to both improve transmission lines and allow the plant to re-fire.

Jerry Goodenough, chief operating officer of the Cayuga Operating Company, which owns the plant, said he agrees that the state needs to head toward renewable energy. But Goodenough said it's "going to take some time to get there."

The Cayuga plant's repowering plan calls for 2 megawatts of solar energy on site.

"That's why this solution -- switching to natural gas -- is perfect. It's a cleaner source of fuel," Goodenough said. "We want to head toward renewables, but it's going to take a while to get there. That's why we think natural gas is a great bridge."

# THIS IS HOW NEW YORK WORKS CAPITAL BETA

## Rallying to let two coal-burning power plants die

By: Scott Waldman

November, 14, 2013

<http://www.capitalnewyork.com/article/politics/2013/11/8535986/rallying-let-two-coal-burning-power-plants-die?--bucket-headline>

ALBANY—Activists and legislators are attempting to rally support for the proposed closure of two coal-burning power plants in Dunkirk and Cayuga, making their case to reporters at the Capitol today.

The state Public Service Commission, which met today, is not even expected to take up the matter until next month at the earliest. But the proposed repowering of the plants, which are both partially mothballed because of market conditions, is already drawing resistance from an unusual union of business and environmental groups.

Business groups don't like the idea of spreading significant costs throughout a 20-county region, while environmentalists oppose a recommitment to fossil fuels instead of a switch to alternative energy.

Tompkins County legislator Carol Chock will be among the group traveling to Albany to call for an upgrade in power transmission lines instead of a proposal to reopen the plants as natural gas.

"This is the last opportunity to deliver our message to the Commissioners before they arrive prepared to vote in December," she said. "The P.S.C. has left the public entirely in the dark regarding timing, as well as other aspects related to this case."

The plants came online in the 1950s. Coal is still widely used to generate electricity. However, it is steadily declining as cheap natural gas—much of it from fracking—infiltrates the market and government pollution regulations increasingly crack down on coal emissions.

NRG owns the Dunkirk electric facility and has announced that the plant will be closed because it is not profitable to operate any more. The company has proposed an expensive alternative, however. Under that plan, NRG's customers would pay \$506 million to equip the plant to use natural gas, which is cheaper and less damaging to the environment.

National Grid has proposed another plan, which would instead spend \$63 million on five transmission line upgrades that would bring the power in from elsewhere. A third plan calls for converting the coal-

burning Cayuga plant to natural gas for \$370 million. National Grid has claimed the repowering proposal would cost \$2 billion more over 20 years.

Thousands of people have showed up at public hearings on the future of the plants. Many of those who live near the plants say their closure would cost hundreds of jobs and eliminate a significant source of tax revenue for local school districts.

The groups that came to Albany today to oppose the reopening are pushing another plan to upgrade the transmission lines. That would essentially obviate the need for the plants by moving power around them.

The groups, including the Business Council of New York, Environmental Advocates of New York and the Sierra Club, released a statement calling on the PSC to reject the repowering of the plants:

“It is time to let the past be the past. New York must move beyond that past, recognize the benefits of the current electric market that has provided more reliable, less costly and more sustainable electric power and maintain its commitment to that market.”



## **NRG not on PSC agenda**

By: Gib Snyder

November 13, 2013

<http://www.observertoday.com/page/content.detail/id/590918/NRG-not-on-PSC-agenda.html?nav=5047>

Not this month.

According to the published agenda for its Thursday meeting, the state's Public Service Commission will not be considering the NRG repowering case.

The Regular Agenda consists of items that, by their nature, appear to be best resolved through discussion of matters covered by written reviews and analyses, also available to the Commissioners in advance of the meeting.

Since the PSC's last meeting Oct. 17, there have been almost 20 more filed documents submitted to the PSC, most of which were at the request of the PSC.

Case 12-E-0577 - Proceeding on Motion of the Commission to Examine Repowering Alternatives to Utility Transmission Reinforcements is the official title of the NRG and Cayuga Operating Company LLC repowering questions. The Nov. 7 filing was signed by PSC secretary Kathleen H. Burgess.

"This is to advise that I have granted an additional two-week extension of time until Nov. 21, 2013 to Cayuga Operating Company, LLC and New York State Electric & Gas Corporation to file a revised repowering proposal for the Cayuga generating station," she wrote those companies.

The NRG repowering was the subject of two Nov. 7 filings concerning a technical conference held Oct. 31 that had NRG, National Grid and New York Independent System Operators representatives present more information to the PSC.

Although the repowering is not on the agenda, that won't stop opponents of the plan to repower from attending the meeting.

A release sent out Tuesday by Kathleen Sutcliffe, campaign manager for the Earthjustice Northeast Office located in New York City, states that a group of elected officials and concerned ratepayers will be asking the governor and the PSC if "New York State will be a leader on energy issues or revert to short-sighted, reactive policies?"

"At issue is a controversial, precedent setting decision: whether to repower the uneconomic coal-burning Cayuga and Dunkirk power plants with natural gas - a plan that would hike electric costs to people and businesses across a 20-county region in western and central New York, or take the plants offline and instead upgrade the transmission lines - a cleaner and far less expensive option," the release claims.

That may be right unless state Sen. Catharine Young is correct when she stated in October that closing NRG and not doing the repowering plan would result in more reliance on electricity from PJM coal-powered plants in Pennsylvania.

"Forty-one percent of PJM's power comes from dirty coal and they don't have the same standards in Pennsylvania that New York has as far as clean air," Young said.

Included in the listed attendees is Tompkins County legislator Carol Chock, Town of Caroline councilmember Irene Weiser and Christopher Amato, an attorney with Earthjustice. According to the Earthjustice release, the participants will be wearing matching, brightly colored t-shirts at the PSC meeting and will hand-deliver a letter to the governor's office following the meeting.

The meeting will be broadcast on the Internet at [www.dps.ny.gov/Webcasts.html](http://www.dps.ny.gov/Webcasts.html).

While the repowering is not listed on the agenda, there are some items on the PSC's consent agenda that local residents may be interested in.

According to the PSC, the consent agenda consists of items that because of their nature, can be decided by the Commission on the basis of written reviews and analyses previously made available to the Commission and do not require discussion. Any item on the Consent Agenda can be transferred to the Regular Agenda if discussion is required.

Under the category of general items, Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation, doing business as National Grid, has two listed dealing with charges for electric and gas service. Under Case 12-E-0201, the PSC will consider a confirming order as to the rates, charges, rules and regulations for electric service while Case 12-G-0202 will consider the same things for Grid's gas service. Case 13-M-0463 will deal with rules and regulations of the PSC in 16 NYCRR regarding prescribing interest rates applicable to customer deposits.

The communications category contains an items involving the Dunkirk and Fredonia Telephone Company. Case 07-C-0349 concerns amendments to PSC No. 5-Telephone, eff. 11/1/13, to increase the basic residential local service rates. There were also items concerning Verizon, including dealing with charge calculations and a service quality report provided by local exchange companies for the third quarter.

After Thursday's meeting the next regularly scheduled meeting of the PSC will be Dec. 19 at 10:30 a.m. in Albany.



# THIS IS HOW NEW YORK WORKS CAPITAL BETA

## **Briefing: The costs of Bloomberg's Midtown Push, a reprieve from Moreland**

By: Azi Paybarah and Jimmy Viekland

November 14, 2013

<http://www.capitalnewyork.com/article/politics/2013/11/8536021/briefing-costs-bloombergs-midtown-push-reprieve-moreland?--bucket-headline>

OBAMACARE — New York accounts for 15 percent of all enrollees — Capital's Dan Goldberg: "The federal government announced today that about 106,000 people across the country enrolled in health insurance, and 400,000 enrolled in Medicaid, through new exchanges created by the Affordable Care Act. ... New York, which reported numbers on Tuesday that are about two weeks ahead of the federal government's, had the second-highest raw number of enrollees of any state and accounted for about 15 percent of the nation's total." <http://goo.gl/EQcvUM>

CUOMO'S CHALLENGERS: Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino's rising star among Republicans was confirmed Wednesday by Conservative Party Chairman Mike Long, who said Astorino is "dead serious" in his deliberations, but should beware of Carl Paladino. The Buffalo developer has threatened to run again if the G.O.P. nominates what he considers to be a RINO, and reiterated his interest in an e-mail to supporters on Wednesday. "When the phonies are expelled from their leadership roles and the Republican Party backs a moderate gubernatorial candidate acceptable to the rank and file with proper financing and the intestinal fortitude to fight the good fight, the rank and file will rejoin the fold," he wrote. In a Newsday column, Astorino adviser Bill O'Reilly suggested Paladino was spiteful, and not conservative: "Sometimes the angriest man in the room is just the angriest man in the room."

MORELAND TENSIONS RELAX — Capital's Jimmy Vielkind: The special anti-corruption panel gave legislators another week to comply with subpoenas as its leaders say the effort is about developing a recipe for reform, not gathering legislative scalps. <http://capi.tl/1a5u5E2>

Newsday's Yancey Roy notes that top officials of the commission are all calling for a system of public campaign finance. <http://goo.gl/Yuj3Ey>

STOP AND FIX — Scheindlin blocked from speaking to panel that removed her from NYPD case — News' Daniel Beekman: "'We know of no precedent suggesting that a district judge has standing before an appellate court to protest reassignment of a case,'" the panel wrote. Burt Neuborne, a lawyer for Scheindlin, called the decision a disappointment but noted that the panel did pull back its allegation that the judge engaged in misconduct." <http://goo.gl/aeMgIK>

FINAL SCHOOL GRADES — De Blasio spokeswoman: they offer ‘little real insight’ — WSJ’s Lisa Fleisher and Sarah Armaghan: “More than 60% of schools received an A or B this year; 3% received an F. ... In a shift, the Bloomberg administration this year won’t attempt to close any more schools but instead will work with schools that need to improve. The move is practical: Mr. de Blasio has criticized Mr. Bloomberg’s closures and could quickly halt any in progress when he takes office in January.” <http://goo.gl/QBDE0m>

HIDDEN COSTS OF A MIDTOWN SCHEME? — Capital’s Dana Rubinstein: In the waning days of the administration, Bloomberg’s City Hall was so eager to appease a union that it thought might be an ally in the Midtown East rezoning effort, that it channeled millions of dollars in subsidies to a developer in Staten Island so he could build a project there that ended up using entirely that same union’s labor. The grand total in city and state development subsidies for the Empire Outlets project on the island’s North Shore: \$50 million, or nearly a fifth of the project’s \$260 million cost. <http://capi.tl/HUxJXn>

RETHINKING THE MIDTOWN REZONING — News’ editorial board: “The overriding reason why Garodnick and Quinn pulled the plug was opposition by Peter Ward, head of the hotel employees union. Ward wanted something extraordinary written into the zoning law: He wanted the statute to bar future construction of hotels in the rough rectangle from 39th to 57th Sts. and from Third to Fifth Aves. — unless the City Council gave special permission for construction.

“No operator would dare to ask for such approval unless he or she came at Ward’s side. Thus the Council and mayor would become Ward’s organizing muscle: No Ward, no hotel.” <http://goo.gl/Cczg48>

COUNCILMAN VALLONE’S TIRES SLASHED — Observer’s Colin Campbell: “The councilman said the NYPD installed a surveillance camera outside his house after he received a death threat and various threats to “tag” his house with graffiti.” <http://goo.gl/IRQmli>

MORE MORELAND — Questioning the commission’s existence — Pace Law Professor Bennett Gershman: “Given the course of this investigation, one should ask: Is this commission really necessary? Whether it was created in a fit of political pique or in a good faith effort to enact tighter ethics rules, the fact remains that federal and local prosecutors have ample tools to prosecute corruption. If ethics reform legislation is really what the Governor is after, and if it is needed, there should be a better way to bring the legislature and the executive to the bargaining table. Historically, many more difficult negotiations - like those between New York City and its unions, or major league baseball and its players, for example - have surely been successful in the past.” <http://goo.gl/KjPqRF>

SHIELDING STUDENT DATA — After public hearings, Senate education chair wants data-privacy law — Capital’s Jessica Bakeman: Senate Education Committee Chair John Flanagan told Capital Wednesday he plans to propose legislation to address school leaders’ and parents’ concerns about student data privacy. “I think there is potential for legislation on privacy,” he said after hosting a public hearing in Albany. “There’s obviously been a lot of conversation about that.” Earlier Wednesday, a dozen parents in New York City sought an injunction to keep the Education Department from releasing information to data integration companies, which have been contracted to develop local and statewide databases. <http://goo.gl/yQopC7> and <http://goo.gl/SF7Mbt>

RE-MATCH FOR GREG BALL — Justin Wagner declares his candidacy, incumbent Republican leaves options open — Gannett’s Joe Spector: “While Wagner is free to declare his candidacy, as he

unsuccessfully did before, the senator has a responsibility to continue his good work and will not make an announcement on his intention to seek re-election, or run for any office for that matter, until after work on the state budget is complete, sometime in the spring," Ball spokesman Joe Bachmeier said in a statement. <http://goo.gl/ICyLvH>

The Independent Democratic Caucus is "actively seeking a candidate" to run against Sen. Toby Ann Stavisky — Observer's Ross Barkan: <http://goo.gl/5k5z13>

REPOWERING PROTEST — Plan to repower two mothballed plants has drawn diverse protesters — Capital's Scott Waldman: On Thursday, protesters and legislators will rally around the proposed closure of two coal-burning power plants in Dunkirk and Cayuga. The state Public Service Commission meets on Thursday in Albany, but is not expected to take up the matter until next month at the earliest.

BATTLE OVER CONTRIBUTION CAPS — Hispanic Leadership Fund fights on — Capital's Jessica Alaimo: The Hispanic Leadership Fund and Freedom New York, two conservative groups, are continuing to push a lawsuit to end contribution caps for independent-expenditure-only committees. In response, the New York State Board of Elections noted Freedom New York's connection to former New York City mayoral candidate Joe Lhota. <http://goo.gl/Ys65P6>

PROBING PINE BUSH — Feds join investigation of anti-Semitism in Hudson Valley schools — Capital's Jessica Bakeman: The U.S. Department of Justice will join state agencies in investigating allegations of anti-Semitic harassment at Pine Bush schools, U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara wrote in a letter to the district's attorney Friday. The federal government will probe whether the district, any of its employees or its board of education "have discriminated against students on the basis of national origin and religion." Senate Education Committee Chair John Flanagan said Wednesday that schools should have uniform rules with strong enforcement against bullying. <http://goo.gl/qKUGal> and <http://goo.gl/NY1QSQ>

PREET WILL GO MEDIEVAL — Top prosecutor recites Pulp Fiction soliloquy — Page Six's Ian Mohr: "Basically I'm just gonna walk the earth . . . You know, walk the earth, meet people . . . get into adventures. Like Caine from 'Kung Fu.'" <http://goo.gl/stXipQ>

RAISING ACROSS THE AISLE — Buffalo News' Bob McCarthy: Anthony Gioia, the pre-eminent G.O.P. bundler in Buffalo, is hosting an event for Democratic Rep. Brian Higgins. Gioia said he's happy with Higgins's service. <http://goo.gl/9WS6S7>

JOHN CIAMPOLI OUT IN NASSAU — Newsday's Celeste Hadrick: <http://goo.gl/47MEDL>

ANOTHER OUT AT SUNY UPSTATE — Steve Brady, the second highest ranking official, also took money from med school contractor — Times Union's James Odatto: "Although [now-resigned President David] Smith did not report his affiliation with MedBest or his outside income from the company — or another company officials say he accepted compensation from — Brady did report his MedBest relationships on his annual public disclosure forms." <http://goo.gl/qat8SO>

DE BLASIO CAMPAIGN MANGER BILL HYER TO CHARLIE CHRIST — 'He knows how to win' — Washington Post's Manuel Roig-Franza: "The people of Florida need to be back in charge, and Bill is going to help us make that happen,' Crist said. 'He's talented, has roots in the sunshine state, and he knows how to win.'

“The Florida contest will be one of the most closely watched in the nation. Crist is attempting a political comeback as a Democrat after suffering a resounding defeat in a 2010 U.S. Senate race that saw him drop out of the Republican primary and run as an independent. Crist, a former Florida governor, is challenging incumbent, Rick Scott, a conservative Republican and staunch critic of the new health-care law, in the November 2014 election.” <http://goo.gl/5yx3OW>

HEADLINE OF THE DAY — WPIX: “Pot-smoking teen to cops: It’s okay, Bill de Blasio is going to legalize it”  
<http://goo.gl/52pb5X>



## **A.M. Roundup: Another SUNY Upstate departure**

By: Jordan Carleo-Evangelist

November 14, 2013

<http://blog.timesunion.com/capitol/archives/199318/a-m-roundup-another-suny-upstate-departure/>

Good morning! On this day 56 years ago, troopers busted up the so-called Apalachin Meeting, forcing dozens of nattily dressed mobsters to flee the organized crime summit into the woods just west of Binghamton.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo is in New York City today with no announced public schedule. But it's otherwise a relatively busy day around the Capitol, with press conferences scheduled by Common Cause (10 a.m.) on the Moreland Commission, health advocates on the dangers of youth tackle football (11 a.m.) and by environmental group Earth Justice on natural gas convergence (1 p.m.).

In related news, at the 10:30 a.m. meeting of the Public Service Commission folks plan to protest the conversion of coal plants in Dunkirk and Cayuga to natural gas.

On to the headlines...

A second top SUNY Upstate Medical University official who took payments from an outside firm has quit. (TU)

Longtime Democratic state Board of Elections Commissioner Evelyn Aquila is stepping down next month. (TU)

Will talk of the Common Core, not tax cuts, dominate next year's legislative session? (TU)

Not even the state's Teacher of the Year could rate "highly effective" on the evaluation system, she told senators Wednesday. (NYSPR)

State Conservative Party Chairman Michael Long thinks Westchester County Exec Rob Astorino is "dead serious" about considering a gubernatorial run. (D&C)

A consultant to Astorino on the potential Conservative candidacy of Carl Paladino: "Sometimes the angriest man in the room is just the angriest man in the room." (Newsday)

The Independent Democratic Conference is said to be scheming to take out Queens Democratic "state Sen. Toby Stavitsky. (NYO)

Gov. Cuomo says hundreds of businesses are interested in his new START-UP NY economic development program. (GNS)

Yikes: Mayor Mike Bloomberg blasted the state's new-ish federally mandated voting system yesterday and claimed a poll worker peeked at his ballot on Election Day: "Everybody should understand when they vote, everybody's going to know who they voted for because there's somebody watching you. And why we tolerate that I have no idea."

Parents are suing to stop the state Education Department from storing student data in the cloud. (Newsday)

Democrat Justin Wagner plans to challenge GOP state Sen. Greg Ball in the Hudson Valley again. (GNS)

The New York Air National Guard has enlisted the help of the Air Force to find a Reaper drone that is MIA after crashing into Lake Ontario. (AP)

Gov. Cuomo has signed a new law banning credit card companies from mailing customers those annoying, unsolicited convenience checks, which are prone to theft. (AP)

He also signed a bill allowing Rockland County to borrow its way out of its big deficit. (JN)

But he vetoed one that would require New York City's Metropolitan Transit Authority to provide a detailed report on the effects of its service cuts. (CapNY)

Former Deputy Albany County Executive Christine Quinn is back at work for the county, in a new job, following her arrest for alleged felony prescription drug fraud. (TU)

Holster those Appalachia jokes: According to a new Census report, New Yorkers are poorer than West Virginians and Mississippians. (TU)

The federal judge tossed from New York City's stop-and-frisk case won't get a chance to argue her side. (NYP)

In national news...

"A growing number of House Democrats" say they may support a measure to allow people to keep their existing healthcare through 2014 without penalties. (NYT)

The woman who was the face of the Obamacare website says she's been bullied because of the site's clumsy launch. (CNN)

Of the 106,000 people who signed up for health insurance plans since Obamacare went into effect only a quarter were via the federal site. (WP)

More naughtiness has been alleged in the ranks of the Secret Service — including one supervisor alleged to have left a bullet behind after a hotel room liaison. (USAT)

Etc. Science is... amazing?



## Here and Now

November 14, 2013

<http://www.nystateofpolitics.com/2013/11/here-and-now-896/>

Gov. Andrew Cuomo is in NYC with no public schedule.

Ditto, NYC Mayor-elect Bill de Blasio.

At 8:30 a.m., MTA Chairman and CEO Thomas Prendergast delivers a speech to the Long Island Association, 300 Broadhollow Road, Melville.

At 10 a.m., the Assembly Committees on Children and Families and Oversight, Analysis and Investigation hold a hearing on Erie County Child Protective Service practices, Common Council Chambers, Buffalo City Hall, 13th Floor, 65 Niagara Square, Buffalo.

Also at 10 a.m., the Senate Committee on Labor holds hearing to review enforcement of certain labor laws, Senate Hearing Room, 250 Broadway, Manhattan. (UPDATE: This hearing has been postponed for a later date).

At 10:30 a.m., AARP NY holds a community forum on problems and potential solutions to keep Social Security and Medicare whole for older New Yorkers and solvent for future generations, Clarence Public Library, 3 Town Place, Clarence.

Also at 10:30 a.m., the Public Service Commission meets, 9th Floor Board Room of its offices located at Three Empire State Plaza, Albany. (Advocates will protest the conversion of coal-fired upstate power plants to natural gas).

At 11 a.m., groups supporting comprehensive immigration reform will release new polling commissioned by America's Voice that shows overwhelming support for reform with a path to citizenship in NY-19, outside Rep. Chris Gibson's district office, 721 Broadway, Kingston.

Also at 11 a.m., advocates for immigration reform hold a vigil outside Rep. Michael Grimm's office, 265 New Dorp Lane #2, Staten Island.

At 11:30 a.m., NYSUT, the UFT, New York Communities for Change and the Alliance for Quality Education hold a telephone press conference to launch a state-wide petition drive "to stop the needless expansion of standardized tests in children's early years."

At 12:30 p.m., the NYC Council will vote to require all City agencies, committees, commissions, task forces and the Council to record their open meetings in digital video format and webcast the meeting live where practicable, City Hall, Manhattan.

Also at 12:30 p.m., AARP NY proposes policies to help New York City's 50+ as part of the "Talking Transition" initiative, Canal Street and Sixth Avenue, Manhattan.

At 6 p.m., the Jewish Center of Jackson Heights holds a NYC Council speaker forum, 3706 77th St., Queens. (Confirmed participants: Council members Inez Dickens, Dan Garodnick, Jimmy Vacca, Melissa Mark-Viverito, and Mark Weprin).

Headlines...

De Blasio said once he's mayor, the controversial A through F rating system for NYC schools will be one of the first education policies to go. Bloomberg thinks that's a mistake.

The MTA says a brightening budget picture will enable the transit agency to cut by nearly half the fare and toll increases it plans to ask of riders and drivers in 2015 and 2017.

Cuomo urged workers who suspect they were underpaid during the Sandy cleanup to file a claim with the state Labor Department.

A new law protects New Yorkers from liability for the unauthorized use of convenience checks that their debit and credit card companies send without being asked.

Cuomo may want to make tax cuts a priority during the 2014 session, but lawmakers have other ideas – especially when it comes to the controversial Common Core curriculum.

Is Cuomo polling on the Common Core (among other things) after staying largely mum on the controversy?

About 200 local parents, students and educators turned out to tell members of the New York Assembly Education Committee how they feel about the controversial Common Core learning standards.

A new Q poll shows New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie in a virtual tie with former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in a potential 2016 matchup.

Five Western New York Republican fund-raisers – including longtime GOP donor Anthony Gioia and fellow donor Patrick Lee – are holding a high-dollar event for Democratic Buffalo Rep. Brian Higgins.

Another top administrator at Upstate Medical University – Steven C. Brady, senior vice president for administration and finance – has stepped down amid a state investigation of possible executive pay padding at the SUNY campus.

Bloomberg's east Midtown rezoning project is delayed – not dead – according to the legislator whose district it covers: Councilman Dan Garodnick.



The federal appellate panel that ordered a judge removed from the stop-and-frisk case after finding she violated a judicial code wrote a decision saying it didn't mean to suggest she had engaged in misconduct from the bench.

...but the the Second Circuit Court of Appeals also rejected a request by Judge Shira Scheindlin to address the panel's stunning Oct. 31 decision to remove her from the cases.

After almost 24 years of service on the state Board of Elections, Democratic Commissioner Evelyn Aquila quoted Kenny Rogers' "The Gambler" as she announced her imminent departure.

A retired police lieutenant who's six-foot-two and 315 pounds claims he was denied bundles of pension cash because the NYPD thinks he's too fat.

Moody's Investors Service has upgraded the city of Niagara Falls' credit rating and given it a stable outlook, in large part because of this summer's resolution of the dispute between the Seneca Nation of Indians and the state over revenue from Seneca Niagara Casino.

Two women who accused former Assemblyman Vito Lopez of sexual harassment filed a legal brief this week opposing Sheldon Silver's motion to quash their federal suit holding the Assembly speaker responsible for Lopez's behavior.

Nassau County Executive Edward Mangano, who won re-election by a decisive margin earlier this month, has abruptly terminated his county attorney John Ciampoli, a former elections lawyer for the Republican-controlled State Senate.

The property tax rate will remain flat again under Monroe County Executive Maggie Brooks' proposed budget for next year — a plan that relies on everything from cutting positions to delaying a portion of county pension contributions to balance the books.

POLITICO has a new magazine.

New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker has a high-powered new girlfriend — Hollywood entertainment lawyer Bianca.

## **Controversial Power Plant Decision Seen As Bellwether for State Energy Policy**

Press Release

November 14, 2013

<http://www.enevspf.com/latest-news/science/science-a-environmental/47951-controversial-power-plant-decision-seen-as-bellwether-for-state-energy-policy.html>

Local elected officials, concerned ratepayers speak out in Albany  
Albany, NY--(ENEWS PF)--November 14, 2013. Will New York State be a leader on energy issues or revert to short-sighted, reactive policies? That's what a group of elected officials and concerned ratepayers asked Governor Andrew Cuomo and regulators at the Public Service Commission (PSC) today in a visit to the state Capitol.

At issue is a controversial, precedent-setting decision: whether to repower the uneconomic coal-burning Cayuga and Dunkirk power plants with natural gas—a plan that would lock the region into continued use of fossil fuels and hike electricity bills for people and businesses across a 20-county region in western and central New York, or take the plants offline and instead upgrade the transmission lines—a cleaner and far less expensive option.

While in Albany today, the group attended the monthly PSC meeting and delivered a letter and list of recommendations calling on the Governor to set a wise precedent by steering his PSC toward transmission line upgrades (Read both documents.)

“New York State is facing an important decision,” said Tompkins County Legislator Carol Chock. “As Governor Cuomo defines his new energy policy, the PSC must not miss this opportunity to start us out on the right path to protect ratepayers, the environment, and future generations.”

Chock, along with Town of Caroline councilmember Irene Weiser, are representatives of a group of elected and public officials from an eight-county region that have officially intervened in the PSC repowering proceedings to register concerns about the proposal.

The cost of repowering the two plants could cost as much as \$1.5 billion—a cost that would fall to ratepayers. Upgrading transmission lines would accomplish the same goal for under \$100 million.

“Repowering these uneconomic plants amounts to a corporate bailout that costs ratepayers, destabilizes the competitive market and misses an opportunity to set the state on a course for a renewable energy future,” Weiser said.

Weiser, Chock, and a busload of their constituents attended today's PSC meeting—which could be the final meeting before a decision is reached on whether to repower the Cayuga plant. The process has been marked with a troubling lack of transparency, starting with the PSC issuing massively redacted documents for public comment.

It's not the first time the agency has come under fire for backroom dealing. Earlier this year, the agency was criticized by the Moreland Commission on Utility Storm Preparation and Response for locking the public out of its decision-making process.

The decision comes amidst an increasing number of proposals before the state requiring investment in outdated fossil fuels and related infrastructure—including the repowering of a coal-fired power plant in the Hudson Valley, a host of natural gas pipelines, and a controversial gas storage proposal in the Finger Lakes.

“In the wake of Superstorm Sandy, Governor Cuomo spoke out swiftly and strongly about the need to combat climate change. A year later, it's time for the deeds to match the words,” said Earthjustice attorney Christopher Amato, who is representing the group of elected officials in the repowering proceedings before PSC. “Judging from the current list of proposals before the state, it's clear that without bold leadership from the top, New York will find itself painted into a corner and indefinitely locked into fossil fuels.”