

Name: Andy Bicking  
Email Address: abicking@scenichudson.org  
Title: Director of Public Policy  
Organization: Scenic Hudson  
County: Dutchess

2009 State Energy Plan Comments of Andy Bicking, Director of Public Policy, Scenic Hudson October 16, 2009 Albany, NY Thank you for the opportunity to comment on New York State's 2009 Energy Plan. Scenic Hudson works to protect and restore the Hudson River and its landscape as an irreplaceable national treasure and a vital resource for residents and visitors. With more than 25,000 ardent supporters, we advocate that an outstanding quality of life is achievable only when a clean, healthy environment is a key component of economic development. Our Saving the Land that Matters Most initiative seeks to conserve 65,000 acres deemed by New York State to be of the highest scenic, agricultural and ecological significance. Partners in protecting these natural treasures include 16 local and regional land trusts, governments, businesses and individuals. Scenic Hudson commends the Governor's leadership in addressing the issues critical to the state's energy future - specifically reliability and environmental compatibility. We also appreciate work by the state agencies and authorities who produced the Draft State Energy Plan-New York State Energy Research & Development Authority (NYSERDA), the Department of Public Service, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), members of the State Energy Planning Board and Energy Coordinating Working Group. By issuing Executive Order No. 2, Governor Paterson has raised the expectation that anyone interested in the future of New York's energy markets, sources, impacts and strategies to achieve key synergies and efficiencies will come together to address the issues critical to New York's energy future. This investment in the future is justified for the benefits it would bring to all New Yorkers - new jobs and sustainable economic development, carbon sequestration and climate change adaptation, and public health. Executive Order No. 24 Scenic Hudson strongly supports Executive Order No. 24 establishing a Climate Action Council and Plan for New York. One vital component of the Climate Action Plan will be how to reduce emissions from the transportation sector-the fastest growing sector of the state's greenhouse gas profile. The Hudson Valley is ripe with opportunities to invest in clean air and green transit. A key element of this strategy is promoting transit-oriented development (TOD) - creating mixed-use neighborhoods within walking distance of mass-transit hubs. TOD Vital Strategy to Address Greenhouse Gas Reduction and Energy Efficiency The Metropolitan Transit Authority's (MTA) recently released Blue Ribbon Commission on Sustainability has set as a goal absorbing two-thirds of the population growth in the Hudson Valley the region through 2030, in large part by charging public and private planners to center two-thirds of new development within a quarter- to half-mile of MTA bus, subway and train stops. As part of his Smart Growth Cabinet, Governor Paterson has established a Transit Oriented Development working group that has partnered with the

Metropolitan Transportation Authority on a package of incentives to support TOD throughout the Hudson Valley. This effort "paves the way" to creating a new context for public use of existing transportation infrastructure thereby reducing use of single occupant vehicles. It also provides a focal point for investments in energy efficient public transportation, use of ferries and water taxis, and the establishment of Greenways and other pedestrian choices that provide healthy lifestyle choices and attract tourism. Scenic Hudson's highly focused and collaborative Saving the Land that Matters Most campaign is consistent with these goals as it aims to protect high value conservation areas immediately outside of the Hudson Valley's urban centers. Green Technology and Jobs The Energy Plan contains the outline for projects that will provide support for Hudson Valley-based initiatives that are developing green technology, creating new green jobs that put the region on the path toward energy efficiency and independence. The Solar Energy Consortium in Kingston - a brain center for a statewide effort to produce 2,000 megawatts of solar power in the next decade - is a remedy for our state which today gets only about 12 megawatts of power from the sun. Supporters of this non-profit initiative based at the former Kingston IBM facility say it could employ 300-400 locally within next three years and as many as 1,000 across the state. Marcellus Shale Natural gas should be carefully considered in the Energy Plan as it has the potential as a bridge fuel to help transition the state to more renewable sources. While it does emit roughly half of the carbon dioxide on a per kW/hr basis than coal, the volume of gas consumed is still a major contributor to greenhouse gasses. Hydro-fracturing techniques have also been demonstrated to have significant environmental impacts, which should be fully evaluated. The highest standards for clean water protection should be set as the standard for this and other projects. Comprehensive Environmental Protection, Tangible Outcomes Necessary for Success Comprehensive environmental protection, stewardship and preservation are the foundation upon which we can revitalize our communities, foster innovation, help address local tax burdens, and preserve quality of life. Natural resource protection, strategic land conservation, clean water infrastructure, green jobs through energy efficiency, clean air and green transit, and urban health and community restoration are the tools that communities are both prepared to use and so urgently need. Scenic Hudson recommends that specific targets and timelines relating to these values as they relate to the Energy Plan be articulated in the final plan. This is a time when we must make strategic decisions that will enable our economy to recover and nurture the emerging green economy. New York State and, specifically the Hudson Valley, are at the point where pivotal environmental protection needs coincide with a great opportunity in public-private partnerships. Investment in focused land conservation efforts can help the state guide development of energy and transportation infrastructure in the appropriate places to maximize efficiencies, adapt to climate change, and attract new development by alternative energy sectors. Scenic Hudson appreciates the leadership the Paterson administration has provided by continuing the vital discussion of New York's energy future.