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New York City Environmental Justice Advocates Release Roadmap to Retire All Fossil Peaker Plants in New York City by 2030

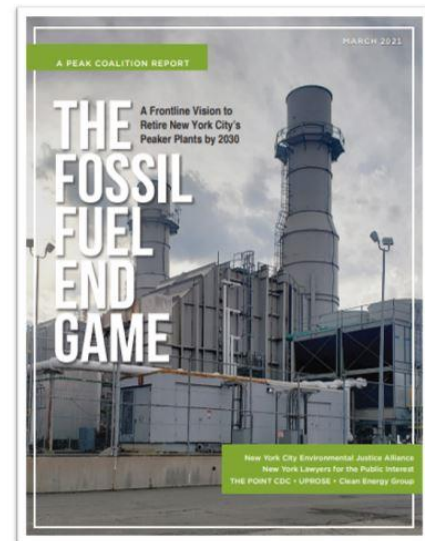
New York City: All fossil-fuel peaker power plants in New York City could reliably be retired and replaced by clean renewable energy and battery storage by 2030, according to a [new report](#) released today by the PEAK Coalition: New York City Environmental Justice Alliance (NYC-EJA), UPROSE, THE POINT CDC, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI), and Clean Energy Group (CEG). The PEAK Coalition collaboration brings technical, legal, public health, and planning expertise to support organizing and advocacy led by communities harmed by peaker plant emissions. The PEAK Coalition issued a predecessor report last year, *Dirty Energy, Big Money*, which forecast a path forward to large-scale replacement and retirement of fossil fuel power plants in New York City.

The new report, [The Fossil Fuel End Game: A Frontline Vision to Retire New York City's Peaker Plants by 2030](#), prepared by Strategen on behalf of the PEAK Coalition, is the first detailed strategic and policy road map to retire and replace an entire city's fossil-fuel peaker plants. It lays out a community-led strategy to replace about half of the existing fleet of polluting peaker plants with a combination of offshore wind, distributed solar, energy efficiency, and battery storage by 2025. The remaining peaker plants could be reliably and cost-effectively replaced with the same mix of resources by 2030. While the plan calls for major investments in new resources, most of these new resources are already required by the state's law to address the climate crisis, the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA).

The report lays out a plan for New York City focused on local, distributed solutions. This decentralized approach creates a more resilient power system than the current grid, which depends on centralized fossil-fuel power plants. Centralized grids have failed time and time again when stressed by extreme events, as seen most recently in the collapse of the Texas power system when gas peaker plants failed. The New York City roadmap presents an equitable and reliable replacement strategy — using a combination of distributed and community resources that do not depend solely on a centralized system of fossil-fuel power plants with single points of predictable failure and collapse.

The report also highlights the alarming economic, environmental, and social costs of New York City's existing peaker plants, finding:

- Environmental justice communities in New York City bear an inequitable burden of pollution and negative health impacts from fossil fuel power plants; 750,000 people in New York City



live within one mile of a peaker plant; 78% of these people are either low-income or people of color.

- The city's aging and inefficient peaker plants are major contributors to air pollution, accounting for as much as 94% percent of the state's nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions on high-ozone days. Retirement of the city's peakers would result in annual emissions reductions of 2.66 million tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂), 1,655 tons of NOx, and 171 tons of sulfur dioxide (SO₂).
- Electricity from peaker plants in New York City is up to 1,300% more expensive than the average cost of electricity in the rest of the state. Public and private owners of these seldom-used power plants received more than \$4.5 billion in revenue to operate over a ten-year period. The proposed retirement and replacement plan could save ratepayers \$1 billion in energy costs by 2035. Reduced environmental and health impacts from avoided emissions could create additional savings of more than \$1 billion by 2035.

On April 21 the PEAK Coalition will hold a [webinar](#) to discuss the findings of the new report.

The report marks the next phase of the PEAK Coalition's campaign to transition New York City away from the outdated, inequitable, and polluting energy system that relies on peaker plants, and toward a clean, renewable energy and battery storage system that invests in environmental justice communities and enhances community resiliency, as detailed in PEAK's previous report [Dirty Energy, Big Money](#).

"The New York State Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act has changed the game in the five boroughs," said **Annel Hernandez**, Associate Director of NYC Environmental Justice Alliance. "We have a clear mandate to build renewables and clean energy resources – and shut down fossil fuel power generation. We have a clear directive to reduce pollution in frontline communities and invest in the solutions that our communities support. This new PEAK report shows us the pathways we have to shut down all the highly polluting fossil fuel peaker plants by 2030. NYC is ready for a Just Transition."

"Environmental Justice communities in New York have long been most impacted by the economic, environmental and social costs of peaker plants, which also makes us the most capable of creating solutions to these systemic problems," said **Dariella Rodriguez**, Director of Community Development at THE POINT CDC. "We hope to see this report used as a tool for NYC to actually accomplish the goals laid out by the CLCPA and to get closer to equitable healthy living conditions across our city."

"NYC's dirty peaker power plants and other polluting infrastructure are overwhelmingly and discriminatorily sited in environmental justice communities like Sunset Park, Brooklyn, where Astoria Generating Company, the private owner of two large plants, is currently, despite COVID and the threat of climate change, seeking to build a new fossil fuel plant in the community," said **Elizabeth Yeampierre**, Executive Director of UPROSE. "Inequities in our dated energy system are rooted in the continued investments in fossil fuels at the expense of the health of our most vulnerable communities. To operationalize the state's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act's emission reductions, clean energy, and equity mandates we must move funds to frontline communities for clean energy projects and stop fossil fuel developers from perpetuating conventional investments in dirty energy and injustice."

"The slow violence of environmental racism and climate change is opaque, not visible to everyday people, including those disproportionately afflicted by toxic emissions that assault and deteriorate their public health," said **Anthony Rogers-Wright**, Director of Environmental Justice at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest. "The expeditious cessation and replacement of peaker plants with sources of renewable energy are key for environmental and climate justice to be realized - a notion that's picking up nationally as well as locally. This impeccable report offers a blueprint and cogent recommendations to make this happen in New York and nationwide."

"Ridding New York City of fossil-fuel power plants in a decade won't be easy, but this report shows in detail how it can be done responsibly," said **Seth Mullendore**, Vice President of Clean Energy Group. "We expect this strategy to become a national model for the equitable retirement and replacement of the more than one thousand peaker plants across the country polluting low-income communities and communities of color; it's long overdue."

"Studies like this one sponsored by the PEAK Coalition are a powerful way to shine a light on what is often hidden in plain sight about our energy systems. This analysis makes it clear that the legacy system of fossil peaker plants no longer serves the community's needs nor meets New York's broader clean energy goals," states **Ed Burgess**, Senior Director at Strategen.

The full report is available [here](#) and more information about the PEAK Coalition is available [here](#).

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Clean Energy Group

Clean Energy Group (CEG) is a national, nonprofit advocacy organization working on innovative policy, technology, and finance strategies in the areas of clean energy and climate change. Since 1998, CEG has promoted effective clean energy policies, developed new finance tools, and fostered public-private partnerships to advance clean energy markets that will benefit all sectors of society for a just transition. CEG serves as a leading national proponent of battery storage and solar to replace fossil-fueled power plants, providing economic analysis on the economics of peaker plant replacement. Over the past several years, CEG's Resilient Power Project has been primarily focused on supporting solar-plus-storage development in disadvantaged communities, supporting solar-plus-storage projects in more than 60 communities nationwide. CEG has also worked on state energy storage policy and large-scale battery storage deployments. www.cleanegroup.org

New York Lawyers for the Public Interest

New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI) is a nonprofit community-driven civil rights organization founded in 1976 to help achieve lived equality for communities fighting marginalization. Through our environmental justice work, NYLPI seeks to eliminate the unfair burdens of environmental hazards borne by communities of color and communities with low incomes, and to dismantle structural racism to create a more equitable and sustainable city, state and society. We support grassroots organizing and strengthening the ability of communities to assert their right to a healthy and sustainable environment. NYLPI brought a challenge to the development and siting of new peaker plants in the early 2000's and is deeply engaged in local climate and renewable energy policy, with a focus on environmental justice. www.nylpi.org

NYC Environmental Justice Alliance

Founded in 1991, the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance (NYC-EJA) is a nonprofit citywide network linking grassroots organizations from low-income communities of color in their struggle for environmental justice. NYC-EJA integrates groundbreaking research, robust advocacy campaigns, policy analysis, and technical assistance for our members and allies. Many of NYC-

EJA's campaigns focus on energy-related advocacy and planning by providing support to the local struggles of our members who are advocating for the displacement of polluting infrastructure from their communities. NYC-EJA also works with its members to concurrently develop renewable energy opportunities that optimize local health and economic benefits. NYC-EJA is committed to advancing energy resilience and just transitions in the energy sector through our leadership in power building efforts at both City and State levels. www.nyc-eja.org

THE POINT CDC

THE POINT CDC is dedicated to youth development and the cultural and economic revitalization of the Hunts Point Peninsula of the South Bronx. After Superstorm Sandy, THE POINT mobilized elected officials, businesses, labor groups, and residents to inform the creation of the Hunts Point Lifelines Plan focused on building climate resilience. This input led Lifelines to receive a \$20 million Rebuild by Design award from HUD and \$25 million from the City towards the development of renewable, resilient energy systems and stormwater management infrastructure in Hunts Point. Additionally, THE POINT is currently in the pre-development stage for what will be one of the largest community solar projects in New York State with support from the New York State Energy Research Development Authority (NYSERDA). www.thepoint.org

UPROSE

Founded in 1966, UPROSE is Brooklyn's oldest Latino community-based organization. UPROSE is an intergenerational, multi-racial, women of color-led, and nationally recognized organization that promotes sustainability and resiliency in the Sunset Park neighborhood through community organizing, education, indigenous and youth leadership development, and cultural/artistic expression. In the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, UPROSE has established the Climate Justice Center, focused on engaging community residents and local businesses to generate grassroots-led climate adaptation and community resiliency planning. UPROSE is working to operationalize the Green Resilient Industrial District (GRID), a comprehensive community-led proposal and model for a Just Transition, to move away from an extractive economy dependent on fossil fuels to a regenerative economy centering frontline communities. For years, UPROSE has advocated against the siting and continued investment in polluting infrastructure, pushing for the development of community-led renewable energy solutions such as Sunset Park Solar—New York's first community solar cooperative. www.uprose.org

Strategen

Strategen is an impact-driven firm on a mission to decarbonize energy systems. Strategen consultants work across the energy ecosystem with governments, NGOs, utilities and industry to help them design, accelerate, and implement energy system transformation solutions that benefit business, consumers, and the environment. www.strategen.com

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