

## Public Comments re Docket No. QO22050327 - New Jersey Clean Energy Program New Construction Program

I am a co-chair of the Climate Committee of SOMA (South Orange-Maplewood NJ) Action, a civil society organization pushing for progressive political, economic and social action by our elected leaders locally and nationally. SOMA Action is a member of the Empower NJ coalition, and I also serve on the NJ 50 x 30 Building Electrification Team.

Commercial and residential buildings are the second largest contributors to New Jersey's greenhouse gas emissions, and aggressive action is needed to reduce these emissions. The 50 x 30 team recommends actions by the Murphy Administration that maximize decarbonization in the building sector by moving to electric power sources for all new and existing residential and commercial buildings as soon as possible. Our highest priority is to see electric heat pumps for space and water heating in all buildings, and to see specific numerical targets for these units by 2025 and 2030 in order to reach the 90 percent electrification goal by 2050. We suggest that NJPBU set a goal of 100% cold climate electric heat pumps for all new construction with HVAC equipment by 2025.

My husband and I recently invested about \$20,000 to convert our own gas-powered heating and cooling system to electric. We recognize that very few homeowners in New Jersey have the resources and motivation to do this, and also that it is imperative that we all do so if we want to avoid the most drastic impacts of a warming atmosphere.

To accelerate this transition, NJBPU should offer incentives proportional to the amount of carbon emissions saved. Cold climate heat pumps and ground source heat pumps for space and water heating achieve the highest reductions, being three times more efficient than gas-powered systems. Electric vehicle charging stations and on-site clean energy generation also merit high incentives. No incentives should be offered for any heating or cool systems or appliances run on fossil fuels.

NJBPU must also give priority to providing generous support to environmental justice and low-income communities to transition to renewable energy sources, including highly efficient cold climate heat pumps, which will have the additional benefit of lowering their monthly expenses. Indeed, these communities should be at the front of the line for the transition so that they are not subject to rate increases as fossil fuel energy sources become ever more expensive. As the State's Environmental Justice Law recognizes, these communities have suffered the most damage from polluting energy sources.

The NJ 50 x 30 Building Electrification Team also believes all new construction should not just be Zero Energy Ready, but should be Zero Energy, including all-electric cold climate heat pumps, optimal energy efficiency measures, and electrical systems capable of handling all future electrical needs. Zero Energy Buildings should also be required to include on-site energy generation (such as rooftop solar with battery) or, if this is not feasible, to have exclusively clean energy sources such as community solar, long-term contracts for renewable energy certificates (RECs), Power Purchase Agreements for renewable energy, or the renewable content of electricity delivered by the local utility.

The NJ 50 x 30 Building Electrification Team believes these same measures should apply to existing building rehabs and retrofits, with similar incentive structures. The faster we Rewire New Jersey and

Electrify Everything in our buildings, to paraphrase Saul Griffith, the sooner we will live in a healthier, more energy-efficient and sustainable state.