

# ULSTER COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Dave Haldeman, Chair  
Margot Becker, Vice-Chair  
Kenneth Panza, Secretary

## Minutes for the EMC Meeting of April 29, 2020

The Zoom video conference was initiated at 6:30 pm, and after some adjustments to the sound and video, the chair called the meeting to order at 6:45 pm. The March 2020 meeting of the EMC was canceled in anticipation of the pandemic, and it's expected that future meetings will be held via Zoom video conferencing. The April EMC meeting was a test of that approach. Bill More, member at large, reported he was unsuccessful joining the Zoom conference.

Although meetings of the EMC are open to the public, Zoom invitations will be sent only to members of the EMC. If others wish to attend, please notify the secretary or the chair to obtain Zoom login instructions and passwords.

### Municipal Members Present

Mark Ellison, Town of Esopus  
Dave Haldeman, Town of Shawangunk  
Emilie Hauser, City of Kingston  
Jim Mays, Town of Olive  
Mary O'Donnell, Town of Saugerties  
Kristen Schara, Town of Hurley

### At Large Members Present

Kenneth Panza  
  
Department of the Environment  
Amanda LaValle, Coordinator

## Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the February 2020 EMC meeting were not considered.

## Council Member Roundabout

The chair asked each member to report on their personal status and on the activities of their environmental commissions. The members participating in the Zoom conference reported their personal situations were stable and that they were dealing well within the constraints imposed by the pandemic. The status of EMC members not participating in tonight's Zoom conference is unknown.

As expected, the pandemic disrupted the regular meetings of town environmental commissions. Saugerties has been most successful in holding meetings of its CAC and its climate smart committee, and they have hosted several public events using Zoom. The other towns are considering Zoom for holding meetings. It will take a while before everyone is comfortable holding remote meetings, but it's a capability we all need to adopt.

## Report from Department of the Environment

Amanda LaValle, Coordinator

Beginning March 16, the department has been responsible for coordinating Ulster County's Project Resilience, a community fund and local food distribution effort to support residents impacted by COVID-19. The County secured over \$2 million in funding and is utilizing UCAT as well as partnering with municipalities and non-profits to deliver meals via local distribution centers.

The department's experience working with local town officials and its outreach efforts promoting the plastic bag ban and composting law made it the obvious choice for coordinating Project Resilience. This is a huge effort that has consumed the department. Meals are being provided to about 8,000 people, 4% of Ulster County's population.

A press release describing Project Resilience is available at

<https://ulstercountyny.gov/news/executive/county-executive-ryan-announces-project-resilience-community-fund-and-local-food>

The irony of coordinating the distribution of prepared meals in plastic packaging after several years of effort to ban plastic bags was not lost on the council. The pandemic has unleashed a tsunami of plastic containers and bags.

The pandemic suggests a different future for environmentalism – a future that requires a focus on responding to environmental disasters

## Ulster County Landfills

Report provided by Jim Mays, Town of Olive

Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency officials are looking to incentivize the siting of a regional landfill by using financial benefits to increase support for hosting a disposal area. Agency board member Charles Landi said some low-income communities in the state have prospered by receiving funding to host landfills. "At the same time that six of Ulster County's 20 towns have income levels below the national poverty line, we're making the town of Waterloo on the Canadian border very wealthy and we're adding to making them very wealthy," he said.<sup>1</sup>

Officials have been reviewing potential locations for nearly eight years. In 2015, they developed a list of 17 properties that were considered to be a starting point for studies needed to determine the suitability for a landfill.

"All the (town) supervisors ... are on board as far as knowing what is out there and what we can do," he said, "especially the new town supervisor in the town of Wawarsing, where there are five locations that qualify on size only. That would be (a minimum of) 200 acres that should be considered."

An astute observer noted, "Everyone wants us to pick up their trash, but no one wants us to put it down."

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<sup>1</sup> William J. Kimble, "Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency looks to entice municipalities into hosting regional landfill," Daily Freeman, April 27, 2020

## Old Business

### 850 Route 28 LLC Site Plan / Special Use Permit Application

EMC's letter concerning the 859 Route 28 LLC project was delivered to the Town of Kingston Planning Board, Pat Ryan, and David B. Donaldson.

Jim Mays, reports that local bicycle clubs have expanded the trail network in the surrounding Bluestone State Forest. Jim also reported that the Onteora Lake area is popular and very crowded.

### Woodstock Land Conservancy; Wednesday Weekly Update

Town of Kingston Planning Board's April meeting was canceled due to COVID-19. The applicant has submitted responses to questions received at the January Planning Board meeting. There's been no announcement about a rescheduled planning board meeting.

Website: [saveonteoralake.org](http://saveonteoralake.org)

Questions: Contact Maxanne Resnick, [maxanne.wlc@gmail.com](mailto:maxanne.wlc@gmail.com)

### 850 Route 28 Citizen Meetings

Bluestone Forest Citizens' Action Monday Night Group Meetings via Zoom due to COVID-19 transmission concerns. Contact [bluestoneforest@gmail.com](mailto:bluestoneforest@gmail.com) for Zoom sign-on info.

Facebook Pages: SAVE ONTEORA LAKE, PICKEREL POND AND BLUESTONE WILD FOREST

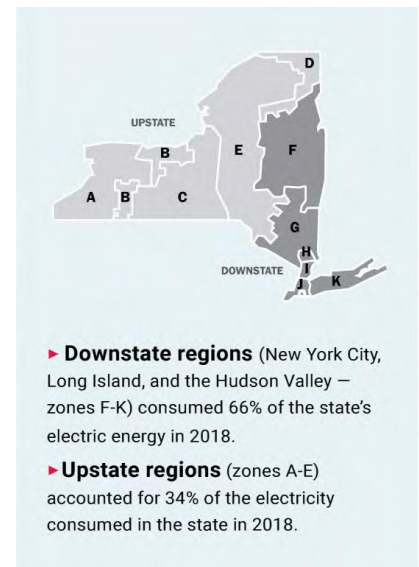
Citizen group's Facebook group: BLUESTONE FOREST

### Indian Point Retirement

New York will retire the 1,028 MW Indian Point Nuclear Plant Unit 2 on April 30, 2020. Indian Point's April retirement follows the March 31 retirement of the 675 MW, coal-fired Somerset Plant, the NYISO's last coal generator.

Several new gas plants built throughout the Northeast have started contributing generation in anticipation of these retirements, according to Genscape, a market intelligence firm. These include the 1,100 MW Cricket Valley Plant on the Iroquois Pipeline, the 680 MW CPV Valley Plant on Millennium Pipeline and the 350 MW Canal Unit 3 on Algonquin Gas Transmission. Older, less efficient gas generators no longer contribute baseload generation, but are capable of assisting with peak demand.<sup>2</sup>

Environmental advocacy groups launched a website to explain the closure of Indian Point <http://beyondindianpoint.com/>



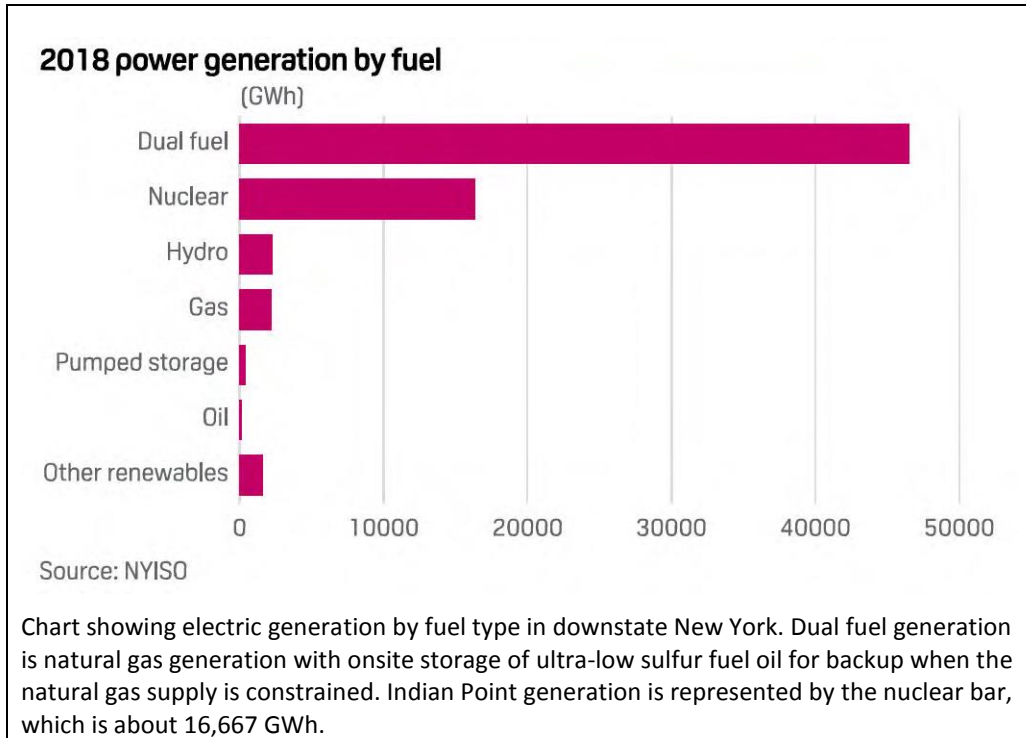
Map Showing Zones F - K

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<sup>2</sup>Leticia Gonzales, "Late-Session Rally Boosts Natural Gas Futures as Weather Models Turn Chillier," NGI, Natural Gas Intelligence, April 3, 2020, available at <https://www.naturalgasintel.com/articles/121569-late-session-rally-boosts-natural-gas-futures-as-weather-models-turn-chillier>

**Downstate New York (Zones F-K) Power Generation Fuel Mix**

Indian Point contributes about 25% of downstate New York’s electric power requirements. When Indian Point shuts down, its lost generation will be replaced by new natural gas generators: 680 MW CPV Valley, 1,100 MW Cricket Valley, and the 120 MW Bayonne, N.J. plants. On Friday, April 20, Cricket Valley commenced commercial operation. There is no shortage of new generation to replace Indian Point.



**Danskammer Energy Center**

In 2018, Danskammer Energy filed a petition with the PSC to repower its Danskammer power plant, a 50-year old, coal fired generator that had been converted to burn natural gas. From the beginning, the Ulster County Environmental Management Council (EMC) has been a stakeholder and participant in the process.

During 2020: Danskammer filed and amended its application; funding was approved for interveners participating in the Article 10 process; and at the end of March, Danskammer issued its quarterly public participation document. With meetings now shut down by the pandemic, it’s unclear what additional meetings will be held. Some of the Ulster County stakeholders that met with Danskammer since the beginning of the year include: Town of Marlborough, Marlboro Central School District, Marlborough and Milton Fire Departments, Ulster County Executive Chief of Staff Evelyn Wright, and Ulster County Executive Patrick Ryan.

The Siting Board received an amended application from Danskammer in response to its notification of deficiencies, but the Siting Board has not yet announced that Danskammer’s application is complete. Danskammer’s intention was to complete the Article 10 process and begin construction by the end of 2020, but the process is at least six months behind schedule.

## Legislature Report – Energy & Environment Committee

The chair reported he was unable to obtain instructions that would allow his attendance at the committee meetings.

## Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm by unanimous consent.

Respectively submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken Panza", written in a cursive style.

Kenneth S. Panza, Secretary

## Attachment

March 3, 2020 EMC letter to John Konior, Chair, Town of Kingston Planning Board, regarding the 850 Route 28 Project Environmental Assessment