August 6, 2019

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

On behalf of the New York League of Conservation Voters, I respectfully urge you to sign legislation (S. 23/A. 4294) creating a second tier of Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) supports for legacy renewable energy projects when it is sent to you for your review.

Under your leadership, New York State has launched a number of renewable energy programs and goals, most recently a commitment codified in the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act to achieve 70% renewable energy by 2030 and 100% clean energy by 2040. NYLCV applauds your recent announcement of procuring 1.7 gigawatts of offshore wind energy, and your commitment to one million solar-powered homes by 2023. While the State has many tools available to meet our renewable energy goals, much of the progress that has been made to date has been because of the Renewable Portfolio Standard.

The RPS contracted for more than 2,400 megawatts of renewable energy, the vast majority of which has been added to the grid after 2003. However, the state also benefits from legacy renewable energy sources, primarily hydropower but also including some wind, that has been on the grid for decades. These legacy generators are not eligible for RPS support. In the absence of a price on carbon in the wholesale power market and with eligibility for RPS support in neighboring states, there is a real risk that New York’s legacy renewable energy generators could choose to sell into other markets or shut down entirely.

S. 23/A. 4294, which passed unanimously in the Senate and near-unanimously in the Assembly, would create a Tier 2 program under the RPS to support legacy renewable energy generators of less than 50 megawatts, with the price of credits set at 75% of the value the RPS’ Tier 1 credits. This means that the price of preserving existing renewables is less than the price of developing new renewables. This would ensure that legacy renewables can continue to be competitive in New York’s wholesale electricity market and help the State achieve its goals under the CLCPA. For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to sign S. 23/A. 4294 when the legislature sends it to you for review.
Sincerely,

Julie Tighe
President
New York League of Conservation Voters

CC:
Dale Bryk, Deputy Secretary for Energy and Environment
John Rhodes, Chair, Public Service Commission