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New York Clean Energy Transition: Insights for New Jersey

New York wants to decarbonize rapidly, with the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act committing to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and carbon-free electricity by 2040. Achieving these goals requires rapid action to transform the entire economy.

Indeed, even before the Act was implemented, the state's multiple institutions have been working to implement a variety of policies ranging from regulatory mandates to market-based reforms.

New York Public Service Commission, since 2016, has already been working on Reforming the Energy Vision Initiative, thinking about a new regulatory framework for the distributed energy future, as well as an ambitious Clean Energy Standard. New York Independent System Operator, the state's electric grid operator, has a proposal that includes a carbon price in electricity dispatch. At the same time, the state is already a member of RGGI and in the final stages of joining the Transportation Climate Initiative. At a sub-state level, New York City has its own goals and initiative, including the landmark Local Law 97, which opens the door to an innovative cap-and-trade program for building emissions.

How do all these policies work together? What are potential synergies and conflicts? Are there any implications for New Jersey? As New Jersey thinks through its climate goals and how to implement the Energy Master Plan, what are the lessons learned?

Bio: Dr. Burcin Unel is the Energy Policy Director at the Institute for Policy Integrity at New York University School of Law. She is an expert in utility regulation, and environmental and energy policy. Dr. Unel has authored over 60 papers, policy briefs, public comments, and reports to improve the quality of governmental decision-making in numerous policy arenas. In 2017, 2018, and 2019, her papers on how to design policies for the future of the grid have been selected as one of the five best environmental law articles published in a given academic year.

She leads Policy Integrity's stakeholder involvement both at the federal and state level in front of regulatory agencies such as public utility commissions and FERC. She also oversees Policy Integrity's involvement in multiple carbon pricing initiatives around the country, both in energy market settings, such as in NYISO and PJM, and in cap-and-trade settings, such as RGGI, Transportation Climate Initiative, and New York City's Local Law 97. Her policy work in New York and California led to state utility commissions adopting more robust frameworks for valuing emissions, helping achieve the respective states' goals of increasing clean energy and distributed energy resource deployment.

Before joining Policy Integrity, she held faculty positions at the Department of Pharmaceutical Outcomes and Policy at the University of Florida, and the Department of Economics at Bogaziçi University in Turkey. She also taught as an adjunct faculty member at the City College of New York and NYU's Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. She received a B.A. in Economics from Bogaziçi University, and a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Florida.