

S.8360 (Parker) / A.9127 (Cusick)

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BILL S.8360 (Parker) / A.9127 (Cusick)
SUBJECT Continued Support of Biomass Generation at Fort Drum
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SUPPORT

The Business Council supports this legislation that would define biomass as a renewable energy source for a single project, the ReEnergy Black River project that provides 100 percent of the electricity for Fort Drum. This provision would be applicable through November 30, 2034, making it eligible for renewable energy credits (RECs) under the PSC’s renewable energy program through that date, or until an alternative funding mechanism is available to support biomass projects.

This legislation will support the continued operation of a facility managed by a Business Council member, and it is also important to the continued viability of Fort Drum, the largest single-site employer in New York State and major part of the economy in the southern Adirondacks. The Black River facility provides Fort Drum energy reliability and security, and energy price stability. It is believed that these attributes were an important factor in assuring the continuation of the Army base during the federal Base Realignment and Closure process, helping secure the ongoing operation of this facility that is crucial to both national security and the upstate economy.

This power generator received a \$50 million upgrade in 2011 at a time when biomass was defined by New York State as a renewable energy source. However, the 2019 “Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act,” (CLCPA) adopted a new definition of “renewable energy systems” that did not include biomass, which renders this project ineligible for an extension of its RECs contract.

The future of biomass continues to be discussed through the CLCPA scoping plan process, i.e., in part the draft scoping plan recommends, that NYSERDA along with the Department of Agriculture and Markets should develop a “Sustainable Biomass Feedstock Action Plan” and expand the use of bioenergy products. We believe that biomass will ultimately play an important role in meeting the renewable energy and carbon reduction objectives of the CLCPA.

In the meantime, the state should not allow the inadvertent exclusion of the Black Rock project from the state’s REC program, which would jeopardize both the energy project and the continued operation of Fort Drum. This legislation will help assure the continued beneficial operation of both.

For these reasons, The Business Council urges legislative approval of S.8360/A.9127 before the end of the 2022 legislative session.

