

**(Pending Committee Approval)**

**Bronx CB8 Environment & Sanitation Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Date: Wednesday, February 18, 2026**

**Start Time: 7:00 PM**

**Location: Board Office – 5676 Riverdale Ave, Suite 100, Bronx, NY 10471**

**Meeting Recording**

1. Welcome & Roll Call
  - a. Committee:
    - i. Present (4): L. Spalter, D. Rowen, M. Lewis, S. Froot
    - ii. Zoom (1): K. Argenti
    - iii. Absent (3): R. Spalter, E. Hausman, R. Fanuzzi
  - b. Public:
    - i. D. Coreas (SBS), T. Shelton (KRVC), W. Fishman, J. Colon, C. Tepelus
2. Approval of Committee Minutes – January 21, 2026
  - a. Approved unanimously.
3. Discussion & Vote: Request for Street Activity Permit Office (SAPO) Application – NYC Dept. of Small Business Services (SBS) – Riverdale Small Business Outreach Event
  - a. Thursday, March 19, 2026, 10:00AM – 2:30PM
  - b. Curb Lane Only Street Closure: Johnson Ave between West 235th Street and West 236th Street (3535 Johnson Ave, Bronx, NY 10463)
  - c. Unanimously approved, see attached resolution.
4. Chairperson's Report
  - a. This committee, and the Board chairperson, signed onto a letter urging support for strengthening NYC DEP's Unified Storm Water Rule (USWR), see attached copy of letter.
  - b. Also see attached news articles relating to environmental and sanitation issues that were passed around during the meeting:
    - i. <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/11/nyregion/rats-nyc-snow-cold.html>
    - ii. <https://www.theverge.com/science/877371/trump-carbon-pollution-endangerment-finding-repeal-climate-change>

- iii. <https://gothamist.com/news/new-york-climate-goals-face-challenge-as-concern-mounts-about-energy-reliability>
- iv. <https://www.commondreams.org/opinion/south-australia-wind-solar-electricity-prices>
- v. Also attached: chart of DEP 311 reports received in January
- vi. DSNY has created a site with resources for obtaining NYC Trash Bins from Home Depot as well as information about how to claim a refund for the cost of one bin. Beginning in June 2026, it will be mandatory to set regular trash out in these official bins for all buildings with 9 and fewer units. See <https://bins.nyc> for more information.

## 5. Unfinished Business

- a. Better Bottles Bill Letter (NY Senate Bill S5684 & Assembly Bill A6543)
  - i. Laura has questions about the fraud team mentioned in the bill, but overall the committee supports these bills and hopes they will become law and expand types of bottles with deposits while also doubling the deposit amount to \$0.10.
    - 1. Sign on letter for those interested in expressing their support:  
[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdZqsHftGg\\_Fa5TGMqYyq222JkLkIgZAtQlcyJBYxxnBoAetA/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdZqsHftGg_Fa5TGMqYyq222JkLkIgZAtQlcyJBYxxnBoAetA/viewform)
- b. DSNY Snow Removal and Summonses Discussion
  - i. The committee would be interested in seeing a breakdown of 311 complaints that DSNY gets in our district, like the DEP one attached.
  - ii. Questions remain about summons and enforcement, especially in the Kingsbridge Heights area. Are tickets mostly in response to 311 complaints, or do officers go around looking for offences?
  - iii. Laura brings up another question for DSNY, if they are still responsible for towing vehicles without license plates?
- c. FY 28 Budget Requests Discussion
  - i. Laura remembers working with elected officials to fund targeted cleanups and additional trash collection routes in the district. We plan to invite CM Dinowitz's office and ACE, who does this, to our next meeting to discuss further.

- ii. Deb from Parks Committee relays that the Tibbetts Brook Greenway is maybe going to be named New Day Park and we should delay requests for maintenance staff, vehicles, etc. should be considered closer to 2030.

6. New Business

- a. Karen and Urban Water Special Partnership (Hilltop Project) want to develop a toolbox related to requesting green infrastructure in our area, especially at Fort Independence Park.

7. Adjournment at 9pm.

Minutes submitted by Daniel Rowen, Chair, Environment & Sanitation Committee

**ENVIRONMENT & SANITATION COMMITTEE  
RESOLUTION  
FEBRUARY 18, 2026  
SAPO APPLICATION FOR SBS MOBILE BUS AT 3535 JOHNSON AVE**

**WHEREAS**, NYC Department of Small Business Services (SBS) has applied for a Street Activity Permit Office (SAPO) application to bring a mobile bus to 3535 Johnson Ave, Bronx, NY 10471 to provide information and resources to the local businesses; and

**WHEREAS**, SBS with Kingsbridge-Riverdale-Van Cortlandt Development Corporation (KRVC) (Applicant) 1 Liberty Plaza, New York, NY, 10006 has applied to obtain a Street Activity Permit (SAPO) in connection with its Mobile Bus to be held at the curbside of 3535 Johnson Ave, Bronx, NY 10463 on Thursday, March 19, 2026; and

**WHEREAS**, the Applicant requested to restrict parking of three to four spots for the mobile bus to park in front of 3535 Johnson Ave, Bronx, NY 10463 on Thursday, March 19, 2026, from 10:00am to 2:30pm; and

**WHEREAS**, there will be no street closure besides the curb lane; and

**WHEREAS**, the Environment & Sanitation Committee of Bronx Community Board 8 unanimously approves the issuance of a permit to SBS/KRVC for the parking restrictions at 3535 Johnson Ave, Bronx, NY 10463, on Thursday, March 19, 2026 from 10:00am to 2:30pm.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT**, Bronx Community Board 8 approves the issuance of a permit to the SBS/KRVC for the parking restrictions at 3535 Johnson Ave, Bronx, NY 10463, on Thursday, March 19, 2026 from 10:00am to 2:30pm.

**IN FAVOR (4):** S. Froot, M. Lewis, D. Rowen, L. Spalter

**OPPOSED (0)**

**ABSTAINED (0)**



# BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 8

5676 Riverdale Avenue ♦ Suite 100 ♦ Bronx, New York 10471-2194  
P: (718) 884-3959 F: (718) 796-2763 E: bx08@cb.nyc.gov  
<https://cbbbronx.cityofnewyork.us/cb8/>



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Vanessa L. Gibson, **Bronx Borough President**

Farrah Kule Rubin, **District Manager**

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### Special Committee on

#### Veterans' Services

Sergio Villaverde

February 12, 2026

Lisa F. Garcia

Commissioner

New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

59-17 Junction Boulevard

Flushing, NY 11373

## Re: New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Unified Storm Water Rule

Dear Commissioner Garcia:

On behalf of the Environment & Sanitation Committee of Bronx Community Board 8, we are writing to support strengthening New York City's (NYC) Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Unified Storm Water Rule (USWR).

In September 2020, the New York City Council passed LL 91, enabling DEP to move forward with amendments necessary to expedite USWR. It enhanced existing storm water regulations, while integrating and combining a myriad of administration procedures to give clarity to developers. After dozens of public hearings, the rule became effective on February 15, 2022.<sup>1</sup>

Clearly, climate change is causing more powerful storms and extreme weather events that deleteriously impact NYC's growth. The USWR was promulgated to build resiliency and sustainability into our urban planning. **Its purpose is to mitigate storm water runoff's devastating impacts: street, coastal, and groundwater flooding, sewer backups, erosion, and combined sewer overflow that pollute our water bodies in violation of the Clean Water Act of 1972.**

Today, NYC is experiencing new and re-development projects at breakneck speed. Historically, developers have always been responsible for containment of storm water runoff on site. However, USWR provides developers with guidance and metrics that must be met using bio-retention methods such as green roofs, rain gardens, and permeable pavements. No one is asking them to build sewers. Despite intense development pressures from the real estate industry, the DEP, as stewards of our environment, must continue to protect New Yorkers' public safety by vigorously **enforcing** the Unified Storm Water Rule.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nyc.gov/site/dep/water/unified-stormwater-rule.page>

Additionally, to mitigate the serious damage caused by climate change and unmanaged storm water runoff, we believe USWR must be expanded. Currently, USWR only applies to public or private development projects that disturbs the soil of approximately .46 acres or more or creates 5,000 feet or more of new impervious surfaces (approximately, .11 acres). We believe more properties need to fall under USWR's umbrella in order to meet the serious environmental challenges facing New York City.

During this budget season, it is essential that funding for the DEP's USWR staffing and Other Than Personal Services be increased to enable them to work with developers efficiently and process the growing expansion of applications quickly. We hope that your advocacy will support USWR's environmental mission and allow our city to build and expand sustainably.

Please let us know if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*J. Reyes*

Julie Reyes  
Chairperson  
Bronx Community Board 8



Daniel Rowen  
Chair, Environment & Sanitation Committee  
Bronx Community Board 8

cc: Vanessa L. Gibson, Bronx Borough President  
Ciara Gannon, Director of Community Boards, Bronx BP  
Alina Dowe, Bronx Borough Director, NYC Mayor's Office of Mass Engagement (OME)  
Angela Licata, Deputy Commissioner of Sustainability, NYC DEP  
Melissa Enoch, Assistant Commissioner, Bureau of Environmental Planning & Analysis, NYC DEP  
Eleftheria Ardizzone, Bronx Borough Commissioner, NYC DEP  
Julie Menin, NYC Council Speaker  
Dr. Nantasha Williams, NYC Council Deputy Speaker, Chair, Committee on Finance  
Kevin C. Riley, New York City Council Member, Chair, Committee on Land Use  
Christopher Marte, New York City Council Member, Chair, Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Sightings, Resiliency, and Dispositions  
Adriano Espaillat, United States Congress Member (NY-13)  
Ritchie Torres, United States Congress Member (NY-15)  
Robert Jackson, New York State Senator (SD 31)  
Gustavo Rivera, New York State Senator (SD 33)  
George Alvarez, New York State Assembly Member (AD 78)  
Manny De Los Santos, New York State Assembly Member (AD 72)  
Jeffrey Dinowitz, New York State Assembly Member (AD 81)  
Carmen De La Rosa, New York City Council Member (CD 10)  
Eric Dinowitz, New York City Council Member (CD 11)  
Pierina Ana Sanchez, New York City Council Member (CD 14)  
Sebastian Chittilappilly, Chair, Budget Committee, Bronx CB8

# *A Possible Upside of a Bitter N.Y.C. Winter? There Might Be Fewer Rats.*

Rodent experts said the prolonged cold weather could kill some rats and cause others to have fewer babies, resulting in a smaller population in the spring.

Listen to this article · 4:57 min [Learn more](#)



By [James Barron](#)

Feb. 11, 2026, 3:00 a.m. ET

It's been so cold that you've mostly holed up for a couple of weeks. When you ventured out, you weren't wowed by the dining options. And maybe your romantic partner hasn't been responsive.

Being a rat in New York City hasn't been easy lately.

For people, that's probably good news. When warm weather finally returns, there could be fewer rats darting in and out of parks, vacant lots and subway tunnels.

"I do believe this cold winter is going to lead to a decline in rat activity," said [Caroline H. Bragdon](#), an official in the city health department unit that handles pest complaints. But New York rats are tough and resilient, which is why Ms. Bragdon also said that the cold would not "eliminate rat activity."

Jason Munshi-South, [a professor of environmental science at Drexel University](#) who has studied rats in New York City extensively, echoed her assessment. He does not expect "a major crash in the population," he said, "but there will be some reduction."

The weather will probably cause a “minor die-off,” with some rats freezing to death in their burrows, he said. And “when it’s this cold, they’re not going to be reproducing.”

The city says that a well-fed female rat can have as many as seven litters in a year. And Dr. Munshi-South acknowledged that rats in the subway “may keep on going if it maintains a decent temperature.”

“It does get cold down there,” he said, “but not as cold as outside.”

The snow itself, while it lasts, is actually a bit more hospitable, said Robert S. Voss, a curator in the Department of Mammalogy at the American Museum of Natural History. Snow not only serves as insulation when rats crawl beneath it, but also provides protection from predators like hawks and owls.

Bobby Corrigan, a pest management consultant who describes himself as an “urban rodentologist,” said that young rats are most at risk when the temperature drops. “Rats have to have lots of protein and warm nests so the young don’t die of hypothermia when the parents are out foraging,” he said. “If there’s food, they’re going to be OK, just like you and me.”

Rats have survival techniques to make it through the winter, including what Dr. Corrigan called “food pantries” that they hollow out in their burrows and fill with goodies when food is plentiful. They also overeat as fall gives way to winter, instinctively bulking up to create a flabby layer that can help hold in body heat.



Rats that have less access to food will have fewer babies, said Joshua Goodman, a deputy commissioner at the Sanitation Department. Lucia Buricelli for The New York Times

The Sanitation Department says that 311 calls about rat sightings have declined in each of 14 consecutive months, when compared with the same month from the previous year, for an overall drop of 21 percent.

The department credits what it calls a change in “rat-human interactions.” That mainly means the interactions between rats and garbage, after the city [required businesses and many buildings](#) to put trash in sealed bins instead of loose bags, depriving the rats of an easy food source on sidewalks and curbs. (The city’s rats

had become so accustomed to foraging on the streets that they developed longer noses and shorter upper teeth than their ancestors in northern China and Siberia, [according to a 2024 paper in the journal Science.](#))

More than 70 percent of the city's trash is now destined for containers for pickup, and the department says it is chipping away at the other 30 percent with a [pilot project](#) that put 1,100 shared bins in a neighborhood in West Harlem. A district in Brooklyn — where a dozen schools are already putting their garbage in sealed bins — is scheduled to get similar bins later this year.

Joshua Goodman, a deputy commissioner at the Sanitation Department, said that so-called containerization would lead to “sustained generational change in the rat population.”

“A rat that's less well fed will have fewer babies,” he said. “We say that if rats can't feed, they can't breed.”

Dr. Corrigan said it was no surprise that 311 calls about rats had decreased in the colder months. “People aren't out on nights like this, sitting on stoops or picnicking,” she said, “so sightings that generate 311 calls drop.”

Former Mayor Eric Adams had an unusual relationship with rats, both calling them “Public Enemy No. 1” and [fighting tickets](#) for rat infestations at a townhouse he owns in Brooklyn. He also appointed a “rat czar,” [Kathleen Corradi](#), in 2023. She said last March that New York had succeeded in “switching the narrative” on rats, and she resigned several months later. (Her [LinkedIn page](#) says she then became a senior vice president at the New York City Housing Authority.)

Mayor Zohran Mamdani has given no indication that he plans to name a new rat czar, and a query to City Hall this week went unanswered.

Still, Dr. Corrigan said, “the city's compass for rat control is pointing in the right direction.” And Ms. Bragdon said that fewer properties in areas of high rat activity had been failing inspection.

“This decline started before the deep freeze,” she said. “The cold is going to help us continue.”

# In one swoop, Trump kills US greenhouse gas regulations

The Environmental Protection Agency repealed the key finding that underpins limits on planet-heating pollution from cars and power plants.


by  **Justine Calma**

Feb 12, 2026, 7:35 PM UTC



*Exhaust billows out of a car tailpipe on January 2nd, 2008, in San Francisco. Photo: Getty Images*



 **Justine Calma** is a senior science reporter covering energy and the environment with more than a decade of experience. She is also the host of **Hell or High Water: When Disaster Hits Home**, a podcast from Vox Media and Audible Originals.

The Trump administration just eliminated the landmark finding that has underpinned federal regulations on planet-heating pollution since 2009.

For nearly the past two decades, the “endangerment finding” has allowed the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to craft rules limiting greenhouse gas emissions under the Clean Air Act. Rather than repealing those rules individually, the

Trump administration can undermine them all at once by attacking the endangerment finding.

Today, the EPA finalized its plans to overturn the endangerment finding as part of its attempts to overhaul tailpipe pollution standards. The move could also affect efforts to curb carbon emissions from power plants and other industrial facilities that drive more extreme weather and other climate disasters. And since the US pumps out more of the carbon pollution causing climate change than any other country in the world other than China, the impact would be felt worldwide.

## “It is impossible to imagine a morally defensible reason”

“It is impossible to imagine a morally defensible reason for [EPA] Administrator [Lee] Zeldin’s decision to end EPA’s responsibility for cutting the climate pollution that is endangering peoples’ health,” Dominique Browning, Moms Clean Air Force director and cofounder, said in an emailed press statement. “Zeldin’s legacy will be the suffering of our children and grandchildren.”

In 2009, when the EPA issued the endangerment finding, it recognized that greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere “threaten the public health and welfare of current and future generations.” The World Health Organization has warned that there could be an additional 250,000 deaths annually between 2030 and 2050 due to malnutrition, malaria, diarrhea, and heat stress exacerbated by climate change.

Now, the EPA says it’s focused on slashing regulations it sees as costly for US businesses and consumers. When the agency first proposed a repeal of the endangerment finding last year, it claimed that automakers “have suffered from significant uncertainties and massive costs related to general regulations of greenhouse gases from vehicles and trucks.”

The agency announced today that it’s throwing out “all subsequent federal GHG emission standards for all vehicles and engines of model years 2012 to 2027 and

beyond” by eliminating the endangerment finding. “As EPA Administrator, I am proud to deliver the single largest deregulatory action in U.S. history on behalf of American taxpayers and consumers,” Zeldin said in the press release.

The agency now says that removing regulatory requirements for greenhouse gases will cumulatively save more than \$1.3 trillion, shaving \$2,400 on average off the cost of a vehicle (without sharing in the press release how it arrived at that amount). The EPA previously estimated that the repeal would save \$54 billion annually, although its analysis assumes that gas prices will fall and excludes additional costs incurred by the effects of climate change. Undoing tailpipe pollution rules by rescinding the endangerment finding could actually cost Americans \$310 billion over the next 25 years — mostly at the gas pump — according to a report by nonpartisan climate policy think tank Energy Innovation.

The repeal is sure to face legal challenges from environmental groups. That could ultimately send the case to the Supreme Court, where President Donald Trump has appointed three of the justices making up the current 6-3 conservative majority. If that happens, the current justices could reverse the 2007 *Massachusetts v. EPA* decision that allowed the EPA to regulate greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act in the first place. By doing so, they’d hamstring future administrations from reinstating climate rules enabled by the endangerment finding.

Congress would have to enact legislation to regulate greenhouse gas emissions again at the federal level. In its announcement today, the EPA argues that the Clean Air Act does not give the agency the authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions coming from motor vehicles “for the purpose of addressing global climate change.” “A policy decision of this magnitude, which carries sweeping economic and policy consequences, lies solely with Congress,” it says.

States could also step up with their own climate pollution limits. “We can’t allow federal attacks to limit Colorado’s clean transportation ambitions,” Aaron Kressig, transportation electrification manager at the nonprofit Western Resource Advocates, said in a press release. “Now is the time for state leaders to take bold action.”

Navigating a web of different state policies could lead to greater legal risks for automakers, according to Albert Gore, executive director of the Zero Emission Transportation Association. “Rescinding the endangerment finding creates huge risk and uncertainty in the regulatory framework on which sustained economic growth has depended for decades,” Gore says in a [press statement](#). “[It] pulls the rug out from companies that have invested in manufacturing next-gen vehicles across the United States.”

# New York climate goals face challenge as concern mounts about energy reliability



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By Rosemary Misdary

Published Feb 17, 2026 at 6:31 a.m. ET

23 comments

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New York's utility regulator is considering a proposal to suspend the renewable energy goals laid out in a 2019 law, but climate activists say a key report the proposal's backers are using to make their case is shortsighted.

Through late next month, the Public Service Commission is accepting comments on the proposal to suspend or modify the green energy transition goals set by Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, which mandate that the Empire State run on 70% renewable energy by the end of this decade and go completely emissions-free by 2040.

A clause in the law gives the commission the power to suspend the renewable energy goals if they interfere with providing affordable, safe and reliable power to New Yorkers.

"Recent evidence overwhelmingly suggests that the Renewable Energy Program may impede the provision of safe and adequate electric service in New York, which would negatively impact the members of the Coalition for Safe and Reliable Energy," the petition states.

The coalition includes various upstate business councils, manufacturing and construction trade organizations. The letter is signed by two members of a state-appointed committee that crafted the plan for implementing the law: Donna DeCarolis, senior policy adviser for National Fuel Gas Distribution Corporation, which provides natural gas to western New York and the Southern Tier, and Dennis Elsenbeck, a former director at natural gas giant National Grid for about 30 years.

The petition cites an October 2025 report released by the New York Independent System Operator, or NYISO, a not-for-profit corporation that represents the state's grid operators. The report [forecast an energy gap](#), increased power needs of 50% to 90% and concerns over grid reliability. The findings also state that the renewable energy goals are not feasible due to federal interference with permits for wind power as well as the discontinuation of subsidies for solar and wind energy.

The petition includes recommendations from the NYISO report such as continuing the service of power plants due for retirement as well as firing-up already retired plants.

Environmental advocates said the basis for the petition is flawed. NYISO's reliability calculations do not account for some of the major clean energy projects connecting to the grid in the next couple of years, said Earthjustice's senior attorney, Michael Lenoff. Those include the two offshore wind projects currently halfway through construction and the Champlain Hudson Power Express, which will connect the state with hydroelectricity from Canada this spring.

Lenoff added that the hydroelectric power alone could fill the reliability gap anticipated by grid operators.

"It's problematic because people have to pay for the electricity system and the choices that NYISO makes influences to a significant extent what investments are made and what people's bills look like," Lenoff said. "It's not just about the money, it's also about people's health because some people have to continue living next to dirty fossil burning generators when that may not be needed."

NYISO spokesperson Kevin Lanahan confirmed the report does not factor in major clean energy projects. He said in order to properly calculate reliability, the projects providing power must be finished, tested and in service. Lanahan used the analogy of counting chickens before they hatch.

"The 2025-2034 Comprehensive Reliability Plan was produced via a transparent, open process over many months with significant stakeholder input," Lanahan said. "It makes use of historical and projected data from state and federal agencies, industry reports, and publicly available information."

According to NYISO, the renewable power in construction isn't enough to cover New York's reliability gap. Champlain Hudson Power Express is contracted to provide energy during the summer months only. The Federal government has already stopped offshore wind construction projects twice, and NYISO points to the uncertainty of future federal actions.

NYISO has identified issues with increasing demands on the state's current transmission system, particularly the New York City metropolitan area. The current transmission cables in service cannot handle the energy capacity they are expected to deliver in the future. Overloading them would result in failure. Much of the generation and transmission is aging and will become less reliable in the future, which contributes to the overall concerns.

"Recent data from the [Public Service] Commission demonstrates that New York will not achieve or even come close to achieving the 70% target by 2030," according to the petition.

Gov. Kathy Hochul has been talking about modifying the renewable energy goals since her first term, before the federal government started meddling in clean energy permits and subsidies and the 2030 goals were more than three years behind schedule.

Her administration continues to delay the release of the rules for the climate law, which were due more than two years ago. In November, a judge ordered the state environmental regulators to release

climate regulations by Feb. 6, but Hochul appealed that ruling, putting the order on hold. Hochul, who calls herself a climate leader, said that the renewable energy goals are not feasible and not affordable. The Governor's office declined to provide a comment for this story.

"I have to focus on affordability, I have to focus on resiliency. I cannot have this state go dark," Hochul said earlier this month.

Environmental advocates and some lawmakers are adamant that the state must forge ahead on its clean energy transition and fill that gap with clean energy. They said further delays will only make reducing climate emissions more unattainable and will sink the planet into further climate catastrophe.

"She keeps talking about affordability, but then doing things that are very much opposite of that because gas is actually the most expensive [energy source] for the entire system and for consumers to utilize," said Assemblymember Emily Gallagher, who represents North Brooklyn.

Before the Public Service Commission can take action to modify or suspend the clean energy goals from the Climate Leadership & Community Protection Act, it must hold a hearing and solicit public input. The public can comment by going to the [commission site](#) and entering the case number "15-E-0302" by March 30.

"This move to cancel our climate law is a cynical ploy by the fossil fuel industry to stop New York's clean energy transition," said Raya Salter, environmental lawyer and member of the Climate Action Council. "Our skyrocketing utility bills — now an escalating affordability crisis with no end in sight — are caused by our fossil fuel present, not our clean energy future."

# Electricity Prices Down 30% in Australia Expose Idiocy of Trump's Attacks on Wind, Solar

Despite its small population of about 2 million, the state of South Australia is widely seen as a demonstration project for what the renewables revolution can mean for the lives of people in the industrialized democracies.

By JUAN COLE | Feb 16, 2026  
Informed Comment

The government of the state of South Australia announced recently that its wholesale electricity price fell in Q4 '25 to \$37 AU per megawatt hour ( / MWh) (that would be \$26.22 US). That's the lowest wholesale electricity price in all of the continent of Australia. The reason the price is so low is because South Australia has a lot of wind, solar and battery power, and output was high late last year. Remember, October – December in Australia is spring into summer.

That's 2.6 US cents per kilowatt hour. The average cost of electricity in the United States is roughly 17 cents per kilowatt hour, because it is mostly generated by expensive, dirty, planet-wrecking fossil fuels.

So here's the thing: in Q3 of last year, the price of wholesale electricity was \$104 AU / MWh.

That's right. In one three-month period, the price fell by a third.

***Since South Australia is demonstrating that wind, solar and battery can cause the wholesale price of electricity to plummet, it is also pulling the curtain from the Trump administration's con game in the US.***

It was not a matter of usage falling off. The government says, “underlying demand in South Australia ticked up by 1.2 per cent to a fourth quarter record high of 1,624 MW.”

Of course, how the fall in the price of *wholesale* electricity gets translated into consumers' home electricity bills is politics, not engineering.

Some 74% of South Australia's electricity consumption is provided by renewables, and the state plans to make that 100% by 2027, in only two years. Wind, solar and battery generated 100% of the state's electricity for 99 days (27% of the time) in 2024, the last year for which full data are available as yet.

50% of homes in the state have rooftop solar. South Australia has been a pioneer in mega-batteries combined with its solar generation. The country as a whole has 3 gigawatts of battery storage capacity. South Australian needs more battery build-out, so as to smooth out the excess generation from rooftop solar at noon and during early afternoon, which has been producing negative energy pricing, forcing utilities to pay people to take their electricity.

South Australia, despite its small population of about 2 million, is widely seen as a demonstration project for what the renewables revolution can mean for the lives of people in the industrialized democracies. Its Labor government has been committed to the project. Only a decade ago, most of its electricity was coal-generated. Alas, its Liberals (i.e. conservatives) are now campaigning on more fossil fuels. Since so much of the progress was grassroots, with people just installing solar panels, the transformation seems difficult to halt or even slow substantially.

What the state is showing us is that wind, solar and battery power, when combined, are extremely inexpensive. Moreover, there is every prospect of solar panels becoming cheaper, more efficient, and less bulky over the next decade as scientific research burgeons. Renewables are already *much* less expensive than fossil fuels.

***What the state is showing us is that wind, solar and battery power, when combined, are extremely inexpensive.***

It is true that because they are a new source of energy, they are attended by construction costs, whereas old coal and gas plants built years ago have already sunk that cost. But wind and solar are now so cheap that in many localities it is less expensive to build a new solar farm and operate it than just to keep an old gas or coal plant in operation.

Since South Australia is demonstrating that wind, solar and battery can cause the wholesale price of electricity to plummet, it is also pulling the curtain from the Trump administration's con game in the US. By using the might of the federal government to bolster coal and gas, Trump and his minions can keep expensive and dangerous sources of power in place, making you pay more for your electricity and arranging for your money to line the pockets of his Big Carbon campaign donors. If fossil fuels were competitive, Trump wouldn't have to try so hard to stall permitting for new wind and solar projects.

## SRs - Top 30 by CB (Last Fiscal Year)

Borough **BRONX** Community Board Sequence **8**

2025

Descriptor 1	# of SRs
No Water (WNW)	404
Fire Hydrant Emergency (FHE)	297
Hydrant Running Full (WA4)	297
Lead Kit Request (Residential) (L10)	297
Dirty Water (WE)	273
Hydrant Running (WC3)	209
Noise: Construction Before/After Hours (NM1)	163
Hydrant Leaking (WC1)	129
Sewer Backup (Use Comments) (SA)	87
LOW WATER PRESSURE - WLWP	85
Noise, Barking Dog (NR5)	79
Leak (Use Comments) (WA2)	76
Noise: air condition/ventilation equipment (NV1)	72
Noise: Construction Equipment (NC1)	71
Noise: Private Carting Noise (NQ1)	70
Possible Water Main Break (Use Comments) (WA1)	65
Noise: Alarms (NR3)	62
Catch Basin Clogged/Flooding (Use Comments) (SC)	50
Catch Basin Sunken/Damaged/Raised (SC1)	42
Hydrant Defective (WC2)	40
Air: Odor/Fumes, Vehicle Idling (AD3)	34
Noise: lawn care equipment (NCL)	32
Hydrant Knocked Over/Missing (WC)	28
Illegal Use Of A Hydrant (CIN)	25
Noise: Jack Hammering (NC2)	20
Street Flooding (SJ)	20
Manhole Cover Missing (Emergency) (SA3)	17
Culvert Blocked/Needs Cleaning (SE)	16
Air: Smoke, Chimney or vent (AS1)	14
Concrete In Catch Basin (IEA)	14

# 2026 Bottle Bill Organizational Sign-On Letter

**Re: Support Modernizing New York's Returnable Container Act ("Bottle Bill") as Part of Your Executive Budget or as a Program Priority, Which Would Increase Redemption Rates, Reduce Litter, Help Reduce Solid Wastes, and Protect Jobs & Businesses**

Dear Governor Hochul,

The undersigned organizations write to express our strong support to modernize New York's Returnable Container Act, commonly known as the 'Bottle Bill.' It's time to update the law to increase the deposit value, include popular non-carbonated beverages, wine, spirits, hard cider, and other beverage containers. Expanding the type of beverages in the Bottle Bill deposit program will result in billions of bottles being diverted from landfills and incinerators. An expanded Bottle Bill will further reduce pollution, especially plastic pollution, all while lifting up workers in the recycling and redemption industry.

Moreover, in a year in which the state is facing a significant budget deficit, modernizing the Bottle Bill could generate as much as \$100 million and save local governments money by reducing costs for trash disposal and litter clean up.

*There are four important steps needed to modernize the law:*

**Expand the type of covered beverage containers.** Modernization expands the types and number of beverage containers covered by the Bottle Bill. Other states from Maine to California include a diverse range of non-carbonated beverages, wine, and liquor with great success. Any modernization plan appropriately exempts all dairy, dairy-like, and 100% vegetable and fruit juice containers.

**Increase the amount of the deposit to a dime.** The impact of the nickel deposit approved in 1982 has eroded over time. A mere inflation update would likely make that deposit nearly *fifteen cents*. To ensure that those who wish to redeem their deposits can easily do so, we need a portion of the additional revenues collected by the state to be used to ensure better compliance and enhance access to redemption entities. Oregon has already increased deposits on beverage containers to 10 cents, leading to an immediate increase in recycling redemption rates. An additional benefit is that an increased deposit (plus an expansion to new containers) will help "canners," those hard-working individuals who collect redeemable containers that are discarded by the original consumer.

**Increase the "handling fee," which has not been increased in over 15 years.** The "handling fee" is the funding stream for redemption centers, entities that exist to make it easier for consumers to redeem containers as well as helping the state's redemption rate. As you know, the costs of running a business have significantly increased over the past 15 years, but the funding for redemption centers has not. As a result, over 150 centers have had to close, thus undermining the program, reducing consumer convenience, and costing the state jobs. We urge that you include a phase-in increase in the fee as part of your budget.

**Modernization has other benefits as well.** The bill's reuse provisions would reduce single-use plastic bottles that are made from fossil fuels, bringing it more in alignment with NYSERDA's Climate Plan by phasing out single-use packaging. Deposit programs are also much better for glass recycling. The recovery rates for glass containers under deposit are 2-3 times the rate as they are recycled in curbside programs. The quality of material is significantly better, without contamination, such that the glass from the bottle deposit program is virtually all returned to glass container manufacturing plants in New York and neighboring states in the region.

The above provisions, plus other important reforms, are included in S.5684/A.6543. We support that bill and urge you to include it as part of your executive budget or embrace it as a program proposal. **As you know, modernization of the law was included as part of the DEC's "New York State Solid Waste Management Plan: Building the Circular Economy Through Sustainable Materials Management (2023 - 2032)."**

We urge your support for this important environmental and economic justice initiative. Including the Bigger, Better Bottle Bill in your FY 2026-2027 Executive Budget or as a program proposal will bolster the state's efforts to reduce litter, enhance recycling, create jobs, lift up canners in disadvantaged communities, expand equity, and ease consumer participation.

Thank you for considering our request, and we look forward to working with you to ensure a cleaner environment.