

For Immediate Release:

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New York Power Plant Emission Rates Continue to Improve*Double-digit declines over the past decade*

Rensselaer, N.Y.—The New York Independent System Operator (NYISO) reported today that New York's competitive wholesale electricity markets have encouraged improvements in power plant efficiency, which has contributed to significant reductions in greenhouse gas emission rates over the past decade.

"Greener power is bringing cleaner air to New York as power markets and public policy work together to encourage more efficient and less-polluting production of electricity," said NYISO President and CEO Stephen Whitley. "Competition in wholesale electricity markets has stimulated investments in cleaner generation, increased the use of renewable resources—such as windpower—and encouraged operating changes to improve the overall efficiency of power plants. The efficiencies spurred by New York's electricity markets have combined with air quality regulations and carbon control programs, such as the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, to produce significant reductions in power plant emissions."

"The NYISO report demonstrates that the state's air pollution initiatives, combined with more efficient power generation and the increased deployment of renewable power resources, have succeeded in substantially reducing emissions while serving the power needs of New Yorkers," said State Environmental Conservation Commissioner Pete Grannis. "But we cannot rest now; DEC is committed to maintaining this progress towards the goal of achieving cleaner air for all New York residents."

Based on data from the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the rate of power plant emissions of sulfur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and carbon dioxide (CO₂) sharply declined between 1999 and 2009 in New York State.

SO₂ rates have seen the most dramatic decline, dropping 82 percent over the 10-year period, while CO₂ rates dropped by 31 percent and NO_x rates dropped by 62 percent.

The emission rates of New York State's electricity generation fleet rank among the lowest in the continental United States. New York's CO₂ emissions rate ranks ninth, its NO_x emission rate ranks 13th, and its SO₂ emission rate ranks 12th lowest.

The emission reductions have occurred as over 8,000 megawatts (MW) of new, more-efficient, less-polluting generation has come into service in New York State. Nearly 1,300 MW of the new power capacity is emission-free electricity generated by wind power projects.

The system-wide "heat rate" for fossil-fueled power plants in New York state also has declined by 25 percent in the past decade. The heat rate is the amount of heat (measured in BTUs) required to produce a single kilowatt-hour of electricity. The heat comes in the form of fuel, so the lower the heat rate the less fuel is required to produce the same amount of electricity.

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The New York Independent System Operator (NYISO) is a not-for-profit corporation responsible for operating the state's bulk electricity grid, administering New York's competitive wholesale electricity markets, conducting comprehensive long-term planning for the state's electric power system, and advancing the technological infrastructure of the electric system serving the Empire State.

“The 25 percent decline in ‘heat rate’ means that New York’s power plants are using one-quarter less fuel to produce the same amount of electricity. When plants burn less fuel, they produce fewer emissions. Wholesale electricity markets clearly serve environmental goals by providing a competitive advantage for more efficient, cleaner generation,” Whitley said.

More information on the reduction in power plant emissions and improvements in power plant efficiency is available in the NYISO briefing paper, *New York State Power Plant Emissions: 1999 – 2009*. The document is available for download on www.nyiso.com.

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