The extreme winter weather event of January 23–February 9, 2026, severely impacted wind and solar resource availability. I am writing to the Executive Committee (EC) to suggest that you request the New York Independent System Operator (NYISO) incorporate data from that event in future reliability planning studies as soon as practicable rather than waiting for the normal updates to the lookback period used in planning analyses.

I understand that at the next EC meeting Aaron Markham, NYISO Vice President of Operations, will give a presentation titled Winter 2025-2026 Cold Weather Operations. This is an excellent summary of the conditions observed and raises issues that I believe are of interest to the Reliability Council.

In March 2023, Judith Curry and I prepared a whitepaper titled "Historical Weather and Climate Extremes for New York". We noted that there is substantial variability in seasonal temperatures and occurrence of temperature extremes on interannual, decadal, and multidecadal time scales. We also pointed out that the most recent 5-year period does not capture the most extreme temperature events that have been observed in the historical records. The report also included an appendix describing a possible worst-case scenario that identified a 15-day period from January 20 until February 3, 1961, that will likely turn out to be the worst-case cold wave. The upper air pattern was similar for that event and this winter's event. Therefore, integrating the recent data will capture an extreme temperature event needed to address weather impacts.

My primary concern is reliability planning related to weather-dependent generating resources. I am a retired air pollution meteorologist who has worked on New York energy and environmental policy issues since 1981. I am a member of the Extreme Weather Working Group. After retirement I started the Pragmatic Environmentalist of New York blog. It is a policy-focused blog that examines New York's environmental and energy initiatives through a skeptical, evidence-driven lens, with particular emphasis on the costs, tradeoffs, and reliability implications of the state's climate agenda. I have never acknowledged my membership on the EWWG at my blog.

As an example of my work, I recently published a blog post that showed that this winter weather proved that dispatchable emissions-free resources (DEFR) are necessary to achieve net-zero in New York. I relied on data from Markham's presentation and New York fuel-mix load data from the NYISO Real-Time Dashboard and the January and February Operations Performance Metrics Monthly Reports. Using these data, I was able to estimate daily FTM solar, BTM solar, and wind energy production and capacity factors. I found that the snowstorm starting on January 23, followed by below-freezing temperatures, buried the BTM solar panels through February 4 that reduced solar output to negligible levels.

My analysis addressed planning issues. I showed that proposals to replace peaking units with renewables and storage are impractical until DEFR is available. Using the liquid fuel generation during the event as a proxy for peaking units, I showed that replacing the 2 million MWh supplied by oil when the total renewable energy produced over this period was 469,308 MWh means that oil-fired peaking units cannot be retired until a solution is devised.

I think that incorporating this winter's extreme winter weather data as soon as practical will strengthen all NYISO reliability planning analyses and provide the EC with more reliability support.