

KATHY CASTOR  
14TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

SELECT COMMITTEE ON  
THE CLIMATE CRISIS  
CHAIR

COMMITTEE ON  
ENERGY AND COMMERCE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
CONSUMER PROTECTION AND  
COMMERCE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-0914

WASHINGTON OFFICE:  
2052 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-3376

DISTRICT OFFICE:  
4144 NORTH ARMENIA AVENUE  
SUITE 300  
TAMPA, FL 33607  
(813) 871-2617  
[www.castor.house.gov](http://www.castor.house.gov)

May 25, 2021

The Honorable Ron DeSantis  
Governor  
State of Florida  
The Capital  
400 S. Monroe St.  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

RE: Urge Veto of HB 919 that Limits Local Communities Ability to Expand Clean Energy and Reduce Pollution

Dear Governor DeSantis:

I respectfully urge you to veto HB 919 which would preempt and prevent cities, counties and citizens from limiting dirty energy sources like fracked gas, and throw a wrench into expanding solar power and updating building codes to provide cost-saving energy efficiency savings to Floridians.

There is no time to waste. Our planet is dangerously warming due to the burning of fossil fuels. Climate change is increasing costs and exacting a toll on Florida families and businesses. Flooding, more intense hurricanes and prolonged days of extreme heat are growing in frequency in Florida. Agriculture in Florida is being stressed and looking for leadership to help them. The good news is that communities, states and countries across the world are banding together to expand renewable energy and cost-saving energy efficiency measures. St. Petersburg, Orlando, Tampa and other local communities wisely are planning ahead. The State of Florida could be a leader in creating jobs in clean energy, innovation and efficiency, but not if you tie the hands of local communities and take our state backwards.

The fastest growing sector of energy-related jobs is in renewable energy and building efficiency. As the Chair of the U.S. House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis, I've watched other states sprint ahead of Florida in clean energy production and related jobs. In fact, 38 out of 50 states have clean energy and cost-saving energy efficiency goals that foster healthier, cleaner communities. Not Florida. Why not? Unfortunately, special interests too often rule over the public interest. The dirty fuel companies think it is fine to pocket more money, while everyday Floridians pay more.

Unfortunately, these powerful, special interests too often call the shots in the Florida Legislature. According to Integrity Florida, the four largest investor-owned utilities in our state

together spent more than \$57 million on campaign contributions, spent \$6 million on lobbying and have hired enough lobbyists to have one for every two lawmakers in Tallahassee. They have fought low-cost community solar power and state energy efficiency goals every step of the way. They keep the “Sunshine State” from meeting its full potential.

Instead, Florida is dangerously reliant on fracked gas. According to the [U.S. Energy Information Association](#), Florida is among the top five most gas-reliant states in the country and 70 percent of Florida’s electricity comes from gas, double the national average. Two weeks ago, the U.S. Department of Transportation issued an emergency declaration due to a cyber-attack on the operator of the country’s largest fuel pipeline. Earlier this year, we watched in horror as a catastrophic winter storm led to the death of 111 people in Texas and left millions without water and electricity for days. In Texas, frozen gas wells and delivery systems wreaked havoc statewide. It’s clear, Florida could be one natural disaster or hazardous event away from something similar happening here as HB 919 takes away the ability of local communities to protect themselves and lower costs.

Floridians and local communities deserve a say in how we power our homes and businesses. Florida is one of only eight states that prohibit the sale of solar electricity directly to consumers unless the provider is a utility. And a state rule, enforced by utilities, requires expensive insurance policies for solar arrays on houses. I urge you not to add another barrier to low-cost energy by preventing local communities from taking action on behalf of their citizens.

Florida families and communities are looking to you to stand up to these powerful interests. For too long, Florida political leaders have continued to ignore the dire threat and rising costs to our state from the climate crisis – and the opportunities that climate solutions bring. We cannot afford to do so any longer. We have a moral obligation to our children and future generations to act. I urge you to veto HB 919, and instead bring Floridians together to unleash the promise of clean energy jobs and cost-saving energy efficiency for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy Castor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kathy Castor  
United States Representative  
Florida – District 14