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Law: Renewable energy & law - by Andrew Curto

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Concerns about global warming and climate change appear almost daily in newspapers and magazines, on television and throughout social media. More and more governments throughout the world are increasing spending on renewable energy, including providing incentives to promote its use and implementation. As a result, there is also an increased need for law firms to help clients navigate the growing, overlapping and often confusing array of government and private sector initiatives and incentives aimed at increasing the use of renewable energy and sustainable consumption.

In New York, governor Andrew Cuomo recently launched a \$5 billion Clean Energy Fund to grow the state's clean energy economy. This fund will advance renewable energy, such as combined heat and power, solar, wind, and other clean tech businesses to boost economic development and reduce harmful emissions. The Fund provides generous incentives, such as rebates and tax breaks for the installation of clean energy systems.

Last year, our firm launched the Renewable Energy Practice Group to advise clients of the available resources and then guide them through the process, including the management of corporate agreements, procurement contracts, and real property concerns, overseeing indemnification and insurance matters, and reviewing land use and municipal compliance issues for sites implementing such technologies. The Renewable Energy Group works in collaboration with our real estate, zoning and land use, corporate and litigation practices.

At our recent seminar on renewable energy, LIPA CEO Tom Falcone said customers on Long Island have saved \$735 million in electricity costs from the company's energy efficiency and renewable energy programs. He added that there were over 35,000 rooftop solar installations in 2016, up from approximately 5,800 in 2012.

With numbers like that, it certainly seems like renewable energy has a very long life ahead of it.

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