Explanation:
In 2019, the New York State Legislature passed the groundbreaking Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA). The climate law is nation leading in many ways from its aggressive economy-wide emission reduction mandates to its commitments to justice and equity for frontline environmental justice communities. A critical aspect of the law is the way it accounts for greenhouse gas emissions by measuring potential global warming impact on a 20-year timeframe to better account for the impact of methane, a gas 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide over that same time period.

This legislation guts the CLCPA by shifting to an antiquated 100-year approach developed in the early 1990’s that fails to capture the latest science and severely undercounts the impacts of methane on the climate crisis. A published peer-reviewed paper comparing the CLCPA 20-year accounting to the 100-year model highlights the outsized growth of methane emissions compared to the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions, pointing to the decline of use of petroleum and coal and the exponential increase in reliance on natural gas, making methane the driving force behind near-term warming.

The bill further weakens the CLCPA by opening the door to incentives for the combustion of biomass and exempting the combustion of biofuels from the state’s greenhouse gas emissions limits. The bill also rolls back certain restrictions on emissions offsets.

Obfuscating the near-term impacts of methane emissions is irresponsible and puts New Yorkers at risk especially considering the United Nation’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change recent finding has found that the world is likely to reach 1.5 deg Celsius of warming within the next decade. The CLCPA pushed New York to frontlines of the climate fight, this legislation threatens to undo that progress.

Summary:
This legislation amends the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act to weaken measurement of the global warming potential of greenhouse gases. The bill amends the definition of renewable energy systems to allow for the combustion of biofuels. It further loosens restrictions on potential emission reduction alternative compliance mechanisms also known as offsets.