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Testimony
Joint Budget Hearings on Environmental Conservation
Senate Finance Committee and Assembly Ways and Means Committee
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I. Introduction: Climate is a Crisis and The State Budget Must Reflect That

Chairpersons Liz Krueger and Helene Weinstein and other members of the Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means committees: my name is Bob Cohen. I am the Policy Director of Citizen Action of New York (“Citizen Action”), a grassroots organization with thousands of members in eight chapters and affiliates throughout the state, located in Buffalo, Rochester, Binghamton, Syracuse, Albany, Kingston, New York City, and Long Island. A significant percentage of our membership, leadership and staff are people of color, and we organize in some of the most distressed neighborhoods in our state.

Citizen Action is a Steering Committee member of NY Renews,¹ a statewide climate coalition of over 340 organizations that led the fight for the 2019 passage of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (“CLCPA” or “2019 Climate Act”). Citizen Action has also organized opposition to several proposed fossil fuel projects in upstate New York, including projects that disproportionately harmed nearby environmental justice communities.

In this testimony, Citizen Action recommends that: 1) the final state budget invest at least \$1 billion to accelerate our state’s transformation to a renewable energy economy, beginning with “shovel-ready” projects, as a downpayment on the tens of billions in investments New York will ultimately need to make (section II); 2) the budget include significant new revenue to fund climate transformation (section III); 3) each of the provisions in the NY HEAT bill be in the final budget (section IV); 4) the Renewable Capital Act and a \$50 million appropriation be included in the

¹ However, this testimony represents the views of Citizen Action alone.

budget to fund the first year of the complete decarbonization of the State Capitol and other state-owned buildings in downtown Albany (section V); 5) the Just Energy Transition Act (JETA) be included in the final state budget (section VI); 6) the final budget at a minimum include statutory language giving the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Attorney General the authority to obtain penalties from businesses violating the upcoming cap-and-trade regulations or other statutes and regulations impacting on greenhouse gas (“GHG”) emissions limits (section VII); and 7) the budget include the entire amount of the Governor’s request for the public campaign finance system (section VIII).

As scientists worldwide have said with increasing concern, we are facing a climate crisis that is becoming more urgent each year. For example, the federal National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) documented 28 “weather and climate disasters” in the U.S. in 2023, surpassing the previous 2020 record of 22, costing at least \$93 billion.² The costs to our economy and to the lives of millions of New Yorkers will continue to rise if we do not take dramatic action -- and soon. Millions of New York City metro area residents saw orange rather than blue skies this past summer due to the Canadian wildfires. **If we continue on the current path, things will undoubtedly become worse**, imposing massive costs on state and local government, as the Climate Action Council, created under the CLCPA, has told us.³

The implications are clear: the Legislature and the Governor must take actions equal to the crisis we face. This means bold steps to ensure we meet the mandates in the 2019 Climate Act. Incremental steps, delayed action, and attempts to weaken the CLCPA are not acceptable. (See Section V for an example of an unfortunate incremental step: failure to rapidly decarbonize the State Capitol complex, despite the harms to the surrounding environmental justice community.) **And we must provide funding commensurate with the crisis we face -- this year.**

II. **The Budget Should Invest At Least One Billion Dollars to Accelerate Our State’s Transformation to a Renewable Energy Economy, Beginning With “Shovel-Ready” Projects, as a Downpayment on the Tens of Billions in Annual Investments We Will Ultimately Need to Make in New York**

It is undeniable that fully addressing the climate crisis and environmental injustice in New York will cost tens of billions of dollars in private *and* public investments. Government was central

² NOAA Web Page, “2023: A historic year of U.S. billion-dollar weather and climate disasters,” <https://www.climate.gov/news-features/blogs/beyond-data/2023-historic-year-us-billion-dollar-weather-and-climate-disasters>.

³ New York State Climate Action Council, “New York State Climate Action Council Scoping Plan” (December 2022), <https://climate.ny.gov/-/media/project/climate/files/NYS-Climate-Action-Council-Final-Scoping-Plan-2022.pdf> (“Scoping Plan”).

to so many other past major transformations of the U.S. economy, positive and negative -- including the Internet, broadband, and the interstate highway system -- both through funding and regulatory changes. Seriously addressing the climate crisis will be no different. And some necessary components of the transition to a renewable energy economy, like expansions in public transportation and establishing a strong electric vehicle charging infrastructure, simply cannot happen without massive governmental investments. The federal Inflation Reduction Act made an important start, but the state must increase its contributions as well: an analysis by the CAC, the task force of agency heads and public members formed under the CLCPA to establish a plan to meet the CLCPA targets, found that it would take \$10 billion in investments each year to meet the state's climate goals.⁴

Citizen Action strongly urges the Assembly and Senate to include in their "one-house" budgets the NY Renews' People's Climate Jobs and Justice Budget,⁵ a detailed list of over \$1 billion in itemized appropriations to fund infrastructure, community health, and energy affordability initiatives aimed at addressing the climate crisis and the related critical needs of New Yorkers. Each of these investments represents a project for which at least initial study, construction or design steps have been taken, so that the funds can be spent in this budget year -- reflecting the need for us to move rapidly to address the climate crisis. Among the projects included in the Climate Jobs and Justice Budget are: 1) \$250 million for the Department of Public Services Energy Affordability Program; 2) \$80 million for the New York State Department of Education to create a new Green and Healthy Schools Fund; 3) \$60 million for NYSERDA to fund the Renewable Energy Sustainable Farming Pilot payment program; 4) \$50 million to ensure the rapid 100% decarbonization of the State Capitol and other state-owned Albany buildings (see section V for details); and 5) \$75 million for the Department of Environmental Conservation Mott Haven-Port Morris Bronx Waterfront Plan.

This list of projects was developed by NY Renews -- the largest and most representative climate justice coalition in New York -- from extensive outreach it conducted to its members in every region of the state. The projects listed are all high priority needs, and deserve funding this year, in addition to any other projects the Legislature and the Governor might also identify. In light of the CAC analysis already mentioned that upwards of \$10 billion annually will be needed, NY Renews' proposal for a billion this year is an extremely modest request that has to be regarded as the minimum acceptable down payment for both houses to put in their one-house budgets.

⁴ NY Renews Press Release, "Analysis shows urgent climate action would have significant economic benefits for NYS" (October 19, 2021), <https://www.nyrenews.org/news/2021/10/19/analysis-shows-urgent-climate-action-would-have-significant-economic-benefits-for-nysnbsp>.

⁵ The People's Climate Justice Budget is outlined at: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1czaYUSPcB8e-772ngdM5BKkignlxdDvyna2XImXIMGY/edit>.

III. The Legislature Must Generate Significant New Revenue this Budget Year to Support Climate Transformation

While revenue generated from the upcoming cap-and-invest program will ultimately generate significant funding for New York's climate initiatives, this funding will not be available this budget year. To meet the goals in the CLCPA, we need to start ramping up *now*. Further, revenue from both cap-and-invest and any additional mandates established through statutes or agency actions will vary considerably from year to year, and in any case will not be enough to meet close to all of the needs, including to make the green energy transition affordable for all New Yorkers. Citizen Action therefore recommends the proposals discussed below to provide reliable and consistent funding for climate transformation.

Invest in Our New York Bill Package

Citizen Action strongly supports the Invest in Our New York (IONY) package, which would raise well over \$40 billion to support our state's most urgent needs, including climate transformation. The package contains five bills to: 1) extend and strengthen the 2021 corporate tax reforms (A3690, Kelles/S1890, Hoylman-Sigal); 2) restructure the personal income tax (PIT) to make the tax code more progressive and to raise revenue from the state's top 5% of earners (A3115, Meeks/S2059, Jackson); 3) create an "heirs tax (A3193, Solages/S2782, Brisport); 4) change the structure of the state capital gains tax (A2576, Kim/S2162, Rivera); and 5) establish a "mark-to-market Billionaires' Tax" that taxes increases in the stocks and investment portfolios of high-income New Yorkers (A3252, Kelles/S1570, Ramos). We are deeply disappointed that the Governor has once again declared her opposition to raising income taxes this year on the wealthy; we hope the Senate and the Assembly together will resist this misguided thinking.

Climate Change Superfund Act

We strongly support the Climate Change Superfund Act (A3351/S2129), sponsored by Assemblymember Dinowitz and Senator Krueger, which would create a "climate change superfund" to reimburse communities for a small portion of the costs of damages that the state's worst polluters (those that released over one billion tons of greenhouse gas emissions from 2000 to 2018) have done to the climate. The bill would raise \$3 billion each year.

A 2022 federal report found that the damages caused by multiple severe storms and other severe weather events like floods in the 2000 to 2021 period cost our state between \$50 billion to \$100 billion, and up to \$20 billion in 2021 alone. The major oil companies that would be assessed under this legislation not only have played a major role in causing the harm, but torpedoed climate solutions for decades and hiding the truth about the crisis. Under the bill, the major oil companies

would be forced to bear a proportionate share of the cost of infrastructure investments required to adapt to the impacts of climate change in New York State, like making defensive upgrades to roads, bridges and transit systems. It is not optional that we complete these projects. The only question is whether the oil companies who are responsible for the harms will pay for a portion of the work, rather than passing the entire bill onto local and state taxpayers in our state.

It is important to note that the Climate Change Superfund Act would primarily address climate *remediation* and *resiliency* -- past harms from climate change and protections against future harms. The bill is therefore not a substitute for generating other sources of funds to enable the state to meet the CLCPA GHG emissions reduction targets, to convert to renewable energy (examples: heat pumps in buildings, electric buses), to make our state's transition to renewables equitable for all New Yorkers, or to make energy more affordable for New York consumers.

Stop Climate Polluters Handouts Act

Citizen Action also strongly supports the Stop Climate Polluter Handouts Act (A7949, Simon; S3389, Krueger), which would repeal certain fossil fuel-related tax expenditures and credits, and limit fossil fuel-related companies from participating in certain economic development programs.

While greenhouse gas emissions from the fossil fuel industry warm the planet and pollute communities, oil companies reap enormous profits. Specifically, the industry made a record-breaking \$215 billion in profits last year, with several of its biggest players (e.g., ExxonMobil, Shell, BP) more than doubling their profits. Yet, New York State provides oil and gas companies with over \$1.6 billion in tax handouts annually, in the form of tax breaks, credits, subsidies, and refunds to support all stages of the oil and gas industry, including fuel production, transportation and storage. With the climate crisis, fueled by these companies, threatening our communities, continuing to provide these subsidies is unjustifiable. Eliminating the tax breaks in the bill would raise over \$330 million annually for the state budget.

As previously stated, the NY Renews coalition, Citizen Action and numerous other organizations others are rightly calling for billions annually in state expenditures to transition New York to a renewable energy economy, and to meet the greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals in the CLCPA. However, at a minimum, we should not continue to provide taxpayer-funded handouts to prop up the fossil fuel industry.

IV. Each of the Provisions in NY HEAT Must Be Included in the Final Budget

Citizen Action joins NY Renewables, the Renewable Heat Now coalition and all or virtually all of the major climate groups in New York State in calling upon the Legislature and the Governor to include each of the provisions in the NY Home Energy Affordable Transition (NY HEAT) Act (A4592, Fahy/S2016, Krueger) in the final state budget in order to ensure that the state Public Service Commission (“PSC” or the “Commission”) fully aligns its policies in regard to utility regulation with the CLCPA. Citizen Action and other climate and consumer advocates have experienced again and again -- particularly through participation in rate cases -- the reluctance of the PSC and the Department of Public Service staff to take aggressive actions to move off gas, despite the CLCPA’s clear direction that all state agencies and other entities must contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.⁶

The Executive Budget commendably takes several specific steps to modify the PSC’s practices to elevate the importance of climate remediation. In particular, the Budget’s Article VII language in several places clarifies the CLCPA’s intent to make the PSC’s regulatory policies align with the CLCPA’s GHG emission reduction targets. Further, the Executive Budget eliminates the “100-foot rule,” which obligates utility companies to provide gas service in many new buildings⁷ and prohibits the commencement of construction of new gas plants to make gas service available in new geographic areas (with exceptions).⁸ Finally, the Executive Budget, like NY HEAT, requires that the Commission review the capital construction plans of gas corporations to “examine feasible alternates to such construction” in order to be consistent with the CLCPA.⁹

However, the Governor’s proposed Affordable Gas Transition Act (“AGTA”)¹⁰ still is not likely to achieve a full downsizing and eventual elimination of the gas system in New York State, which is critical to achieving the CLCPA targets. Specifically, the AGTA does not include several vital provisions contained in NY HEAT, including those: 1) limiting residential consumers’ energy burdens to 6% of their household incomes; and 2) mandating a “right-sizing” of the state’s gas distribution system to meet the greenhouse gas reduction targets in the CLCPA. As to the 6%

⁶ See, e.g., CLCPA § 8 (PSC and other state agencies and entities must issue regulations “to contribute to achieving the statewide greenhouse gas emissions limits” in the CLCPA).

⁷ See, e.g., S8308/A8808 (TED Language Bill), Part P, proposed amendments to Public Service Law (PSL) §§ 4(1), 4(2) (“TED Bill, Part P”). While we differ with the suggestion by some that the existing CLCPA language does not permit the PSC to aggressively reduce GHG emissions and shut down existing gas infrastructure, we fully agree that clarifying certain CLCPA language and other statutory amendments -- like repealing the 100-foot rule -- would be extremely beneficial.

⁸ TED Bill, Part P, Bill § 12, adding proposed PSL § 66-w.

⁹ See proposed PSL § 66(12-e) in TED Bill, Part P and in NY HEAT.

¹⁰ TED Bill, Part P.

provision, it is ironic that the Governor and the administration have emphasized -- in numerous public statements, including the State of the State address¹¹ -- the importance of making energy more affordable. Yet, they have not included NY HEAT's 6% provision, which establishes a mandate to make energy *and the transition to gas heating and cooling* more affordable for New Yorkers through steps like subsidizing the purchase of heat pumps.

Further, the Executive Budget does not include several NY HEAT provisions establishing affirmative mandates to institute proceedings with the goal of downsizing the gas system: critical steps to achieving the CLCPA GHG emissions targets.¹² Perhaps the most important of the NY HEAT provisions the Governor does not include is a mandate that one year from the law's effective date, the Commission set "interim emission reduction targets for each gas utility as well as developing a periodic process to review and update such targets."¹³ The text of the CLCPA of course only sets statutory GHG emissions reduction targets for 2030 and 2050.¹⁴ Unless interim targets are set, and a monitoring process is put in place, there is no way of ensuring that the 2030 and 2050 goals will be met.

If enacted in its entirety, NY HEAT will eliminate the costly requirement that ratepayers pay to expand fossil fuel infrastructure, lowering utility bills by about \$75 a month for those least able to pay while fighting climate change and reorienting the PSC's mission away from favoring the gas buildout.

V. The Renewable Capitol Act Should Be Included in the Budget and a \$50 Million Appropriation Provided to Fund the First Year of the Complete Decarbonization of the State Capitol and Other State-Owned Buildings in Downtown Albany

It is critical that New York prioritize decarbonizing state operations, including electrifying public buildings owned and operated by the State. Decarbonizing state operations can provide models for private parties to follow while helping to meet the state's climate goals.

Citizen Action strongly recommends that the State start with state-owned buildings in downtown Albany that have long been powered by the Sheridan Avenue Steam Plan ("SASP"),

¹¹ See, e.g., State of the State Address 2024, at 95 ("Governor Hochul has made affordability a cornerstone of her energy agenda").

¹² See, e.g., NY HEAT, Bill §14, proposed PSL §77-a (1) (requiring that the PSC institute a proceeding or proceedings to "better align its regulation of utility services" with the "timely achievement" of CLCPA's emissions reduction mandates), and NY HEAT, Bill § 14, proposed PSL §77-a(1)(b) (requiring that the PSC revise its existing rules to "eliminate all main and service line extension allowances for gas services").

¹³ NY HEAT, Bill §14, proposed PSL §77-a(1)(f).

¹⁴ Environmental Conservation Law (ECL) §75-0109.

owned and operated by the state. This would address the climate crisis while seeking to rectify a long history of environmental racism by the State, including the placement of fossil fuel facilities and a trash-to-steam plant in an environmental justice community. In September of 2019, after years of opposition by local organizations, including SHARE (Sheridan Hollow Alliance for Renewable Energy) and Citizen Action, the New York Power Authority (“NYPA”) and the Office of General Services (“OGS”) abandoned their plans to install two gas-fired turbines at state-owned facilities on Sheridan Avenue, that were intended to heat, cool, and provide electricity to the Capitol and Empire State Plaza (“ESP”). The agencies also took some limited steps to lower the carbon footprint of the Capitol building and ESP¹⁵ and subsequent state budgets provided funding to move the facilities towards renewables.

However, on January 30th, the Hochul demonstration disappointed us when, during her Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25 Executive Budget testimony, Office of General Services (OGS) Commissioner Jeanette Moy made a weak commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions at Empire State Plaza by 50% within ten years, coupled with a vague promise to “examine opportunities to achieve full decarbonization long-term.”¹⁶ This proposal does not go close to far enough: it proceeds far too slowly, and does not meet the CLCPA greenhouse gas emissions reduction mandates. By way of comparison, the State of Michigan recently took 18 months to take all the steps to fully decarbonize its state capitol building by installing a geothermal energy system, following Oklahoma and Colorado. It is hard to see how New York State can expect private parties to meet the emissions reduction mandates in the CLCPA when the State itself is not committing to meet the CLCPA targets as to its own facilities. It frankly should embarrass all of us that states like Oklahoma are moving faster than New York, which rightly considers itself a climate leader among the states. Further, ten years to do half the job of full electrification is far too long to address the historic harms to the surrounding environmental justice community.

Instead, we are calling on the State to go further and operate area State buildings entirely on renewables in a much more rapid fashion than the Commissioner suggests and to make a legally binding commitment to decarbonize. Specifically, we join SHARE in calling for the legislature and Governor to include the Renewable Capitol Act (“RCA”; A5633, Fahy/S2689, Breslin) in the final state budget. The bill mandates that the state facilities in downtown Albany powered by

¹⁵ See SHARE Blog Post, “Progress Toward Powering the Empire State Plaza with Renewable Energy” (February 13, 2022), <https://sharealbany.org/2022/02/13/progress-toward-powering-the-empire-state-plaza-with-renewable-energy/>.

¹⁶ See SHARE Press Release, “Climate Groups Urge Lawmakers to Commit to Convert State Capitol to 100% Renewable Energy Following OGS Budget Testimony” (January 31, 2024), <https://sharealbany.org/2024/01/31/climate-groups-urge-lawmakers-to-commit-to-convert-state-capitol-to-100-renewable-energy-following-ogs-budget-testimony/> (linking to Commissioner Moy testimony at the January 30th economic development joint budget hearings).

SASP, including the Empire State Plaza, the State Capitol building, the State Museum, and the Alfred E. Smith Building receive their electric power, and heating and cooling from 100% renewable energy within three years, after a planning process with local community input. The bill was recently amended to conform with language enacted as part of the FY 2023-24 state budget to begin the initial steps to decarbonize 15 of the highest emitting state facilities. (ESP is one of such facilities.) Further, the FY 2024-25 budget should contain an appropriation of \$50 million (supported groups like SHARE and NY Renews) to complete the fact-finding and planning process outlined in the RCA and to begin construction work.

VI. The Justice Energy Transition Act Should be Included in the Final State Budget

Citizen Action recommends that the Just Energy Transition Act (“JETA,” A4866/S2935), sponsored by Senator Parker and Assemblymember Kelles be included in the final budget. JETA directs the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) to develop a study of the options to facilitate the replacement and redevelopment of the state’s fossil fuel facilities by 2030. Even more importantly, the bill also directs the PSC and DEC to commence programs and other proceedings to implement the study. JETA will convert fossil fuel-combustion facilities, including notoriously dirty peaker plants, into renewable energy plants. This work will create jobs and improve air quality in nearby communities, often the most disadvantaged communities in the state, while advancing the GHG emissions reduction and climate justice provisions of the CLCPA. It is critical that these sites be redeveloped in a way that ensures that state residents still will have adequate power and that impacted workers be allowed to keep their jobs or be trained for comparable ones.

VII. At a Minimum, the Final Budget Should Include Statutory Language Giving DEC and the Attorney General the Authority to Impose Penalties on Polluters That Violate the Cap and Invest Regulations and Other Statutes or Regulations Setting Emissions Limits

In her 2023 State of the State address and Executive Budget, the Governor proposed a cap-and-invest system as the primary means of ensuring enforceability and a declining cap on emissions.¹⁷ Under the cap-and-invest scheme laid out in the Scoping Plan, an annual cap on greenhouse gas emissions in the state would be set, which would be reduced every year to meet the 40 by 2030 and 85 by 2050 GHS emissions reduction targets in the CLCPA. Large scale emitters of greenhouse gases and distributors of heating and transportation fuels will be required to

¹⁷ “Achieving the New York Dream” (2023 State of the State Book)(January 10, 2023), at 123-131 (“2023 SOTS Book”), <https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2023-01/2023SOTSBook.pdf>; FY 2024 New York State Executive Budget, Transportation, Economic Development and Environmental Conservation Article VII Legislation, Part AAA

purchase allowances via auctions conducted by the State reflecting the “emissions associated with their activities.”¹⁸

In the Scoping Plan, the CAC clearly recognized that the GHG climate mandates were not legally unenforceable without additional regulations and/or statutory changes. The Scoping Plan said that: “only a cap-and-invest program would implement ... *a mechanism for State enforcement of such limits against individual sources, thus ensuring that aggregate emissions do not exceed the statewide emissions limits.*”¹⁹

We understand that some members of the Legislature may be reluctant to pass cap-and-invest legislation this year on the theory that DEC should be allowed to first finish its regulations, originally mandated under the CLCPA to be issued on January 1, 2024. We respectfully disagree and point out that it is likely that the DEC regulations will be issued late in the 2024 session or even after the session. This would move the timeline for the consideration of any corrective legislation to the 2025 session, potentially impeding the effective implementation of cap-and-invest in New York State.

However, even if the Legislature and the Governor decides not to include cap-and-invest provisions in the final state budget, **we strongly recommend that at least one provision be included, a penalty provision for violations of the DEC cap-and-invest regulations, which must be set by statute.** The CLCPA does not impose penalties on businesses that do not comply with any regulations it mandates: a major gap in the existing statute. **We therefore recommend that the Legislature at a minimum pass in 2024 “placeholder” enforcement provisions providing for penalties for businesses that violate emissions limits established by DEC or other state executive agencies or other violations,**²⁰ **whether instituted as part of cap-and-invest or of other statutory provisions added to the CLCPA that impact on GHG emissions,** like, for example, mandates as to green buildings or electric vehicle sales. Further, the Attorney General, who already has general authority to enforce the state’s laws through civil actions²¹ and a long history of aggressive environmental enforcement, should be given the explicit statutory authority to enforce the state’s GHG emissions limits in addition to DEC. A model for an enforcement provision that could be passed in statute as part of the Executive Budget is contained in A8469 (Kelles).²²

¹⁸ See 2023 SOTUS Book, at 123.

¹⁹ Scoping Plan”, at 340 [emphasis added].

²⁰ Section 8 of the CLCPA explicitly authorizes and directs all state agencies to “promulgate regulations to contribute to achieving the statewide greenhouse gas emissions limits” in the CLCPA.

²¹ See Executive Law §63(12).

²² See A8469, Bill §8, proposed ECL §75-0129.

VIII. The Final Budget Should Include the Full Amount of the Governor’s Executive Budget Request for the Public Campaign Finance System

Finally, we urge that the entire amount of the Governor’s Executive Budget request for \$114.5 million for the Public Campaign Finance Board (PCFB) be included in the final budget. This includes \$14.5 million for administrative costs and \$100 million for public matching funds. This investment will help ensure that the program fulfills its promise to strengthen our democracy by elevating the voices of everyday New Yorkers in our political process and delivering on issues that matter most to us.

Climate change is a classic instance where a robust public campaign financing system in our state is critical. New Yorkers overwhelmingly support action to address climate change, yet certain critical pieces of legislation, like those mentioned in this testimony have been pending in the Legislature for a number of years without enactment. We fear that a well-documented industry campaign to halt progress on climate and to distort the indisputable facts about climate change may be having an impact on the Legislature’s and the Governor’s ability to act on certain critical bills.²³ In climate as well as other critical areas like housing, corporate contributors’ voices and opinions, and those of their lobbying firms, are often at odds with the solutions our communities need. Full funding of New York’s public campaign finance system will elevate the voices of average New Yorkers in our climate debate and increase public confidence that the public interest rather than the profits of the fossil fuel industry is driving the solutions.

In closing, I would like to thank you on behalf of Citizen Action for the opportunity to offer our views on climate policies and the state budget. Should either of your committees or any members want more information on these issues, please feel free to contact me at bcohen@citizenactionny.org or at 518-265-6183.

²³ See, Little Sis Blog Post, “Fossil Fuel Industry Mobilizes Front Group To Weaken NY Climate Law,” (April 19, 2022), <https://news.littlesis.org/2022/04/19/fossil-fuel-industry-mobilizes-front-group-to-weaken-ny-climate-law/>.