



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

Senator James Sanders Jr. Rallies Community for Earth Day with Action-Packed Celebration

OLALEKAN OMODUNBI April 22, 2024

| ISSUE: **EARTH DAY**



Photo credit: Brian Cole of Olschool Productions.

Queens, NY — Senator James Sanders Jr. ignited a powerful Earth Day celebration, emphasizing the importance of climate action and community involvement. The event, held on April 20th, drew enthusiastic participation from residents, inspiring collaboration and tangible steps towards a healthier planet.

The day began with a well-attended Breakfast Reception provided where attendees networked and discussed environmental solutions. Following the reception was a community tree planting initiative, offering a hands-on opportunity to make a positive environmental impact on the local area.

The highlight of the celebration continued with a re-enactment of the popular "Tuvalu Challenge," a simulation highlighting the urgent challenges faced by low-lying nations due to climate change. Sanders paid obeisance to the waters and this impactful experience resonated deeply with participants.

The day culminated in a powerful "Call for Climate Change Action," delivering a unified message about the need for immediate and sustained efforts to address the climate crisis.

The following quotes from elected officials and partner organizations further highlight the event's significance:

Senator James Sanders Jr. said, "Time is no longer a bystander in our fight against climate change; it's the rallying cry echoing through every community. Our urgency is not just global; it's deeply local. Each action we take, every decision we make within our own neighborhoods, reverberates globally. Let's embrace this urgency as a beacon of hope, igniting grassroots movements and empowering communities to champion sustainable change, for the health of our planet and the prosperity of our localities."

Assemblymember Alicia L. Hyndman said, "Earth Day serves as a poignant reminder of our responsibility to protect and preserve our planet for current and future generations. Through events like our vibrant Earth Day celebration and the annual 'Tuvalu Challenge,' we highlight the critical need for climate action and community involvement. By coming together, we can harness the collective power to address climate change and create a

sustainable future. Let's seize this opportunity to make a meaningful difference for our planet and all who call it home."

Assemblymember Khaleel Anderson said, "This Saturday, I am teaming up with Senator James Sanders Jr. for the "Tuvalu Challenge" at Rockaway Beach for Earth Day. Through the Tuvalu challenge, we will confront the rising sea levels firsthand. It's time for proactive planning to ensure equitable changes for residents and achieve ecological restoration with proper planning."

NYC Council Member Selvena N. Brooks-Powers, "As we've all seen in recent years, climate change poses a major threat to NYC. Studies suggest the Rockaways may be permanently inundated with water by 2080 if coastal protections are not put in place, which is why we must prioritize opportunities to enact sustainable change through proactive legislation and collective action. I remain committed to advancing new climate change initiatives like NYC Local Law 46, which recently went into effect to create the Office of Marine Debris Disposal and Vessel Surrendering. This office aims to prevent and clean abandoned and derelict vessels, which can harm marine habitats and leak pollutants into the surrounding environment. Senator Sanders continues to be an essential voice in our fight against climate change, and I appreciate his efforts to bring us together today to uplift this critical issue."

Marcus Sibley, National Wildlife Federation NY Metro Director of Conservation Partnerships said, "We applaud Senator Sanders Jr.'s commitment to ensure that New Yorkers are aware of the causes impacting the changes to their climate, and the urgent efforts necessary to address them. The Annual 'Tuvalu Challenge' Earth Day Weekend event, along with the Senator's support of needed and relevant legislation such as the TREES Act, demonstrate a dedication to climate justice that's essential to an inclusive environmental movement."

Lou Harris, Black Surfers Association said, "I want our message to reach as many kids as possible. I want kids to know how they can stop the effects of climate change, by unplugging plugs they're no longer using and also when mailing a package using as little tape as possible."

Jonathan Cohen, Policy Director, New York Solar Energy Industries Association said, "Climate change induced sea level rise is an existential threat to New York's coastal communities. Our best hope to mitigate that threat is to ensure that our most vulnerable communities can access clean energy resources like solar and energy storage. Our members are deeply grateful to Senator Sanders for shining a light on this critically important issue, and for consistently calling for bold actions to make the benefits of clean energy accessible to everyone. The communities of Southeast Queens are safer and healthier because of Senator Sanders' leadership, and I'm proud to stand beside him today."

Mel Julien, Community Engagement Director and Edgemere resident, NYC Plover Project said, "The NYC Plover Project is honored to join Senator James Sanders Jr. in his efforts to bring awareness and action to climate change. As a coastal community that is home to all forms of life, from humans to wildlife like endangered and fragile shorebirds, the risk that climate change poses is dire and right in our backyards. The need for urgent action in protecting our fragile ecosystems in Rockaway is clear, and we are ready to continue to be partners in this fight."

Aurora Crooks, NY Renews Member Partnership & Engagement Manager said, "Our members are glad to join Senator Sanders in calling attention to the threat of climate change and the leadership of those who are being hit hardest by its effects, whether local environmental

justice communities in New York or those in Pacific Island countries. Those closest to the problem are those best prepared to identify the solutions. Now is the time for New York to act dramatically to reduce our emissions and redouble our efforts to reduce the impact of climate change, not just in New York, but worldwide. Listening to the leadership of those most impacted is vital."

Jeff Conant, Director of Friends of the Earth's International Forest Program said, "We're thankful for Senator Sanders' leadership and raising awareness about the very clear and present threats of climate change. Climate change is not just a problem happening somewhere else, it's happening right here in New York. That's why it's time for New York's political leaders to take steps toward addressing the crisis, including passing the TREES Act, which will help mitigate the worst to come."

Joe Sackman, Chief of Staff, Long Island Progressive Coalition said, "We thank Senator Sanders for bringing us together at this Earth Day event to raise the alarm for climate action. Long Island and the Rockaways have two major things in common: we know the utter devastation of climate change as coastal communities and we share an electric utility, which is currently incapable of meeting our climate goals or protecting us from climate-fueled storms. In order to lower rates, increase reliability, ensure greater accountability, and meet the mandates of New York's climate law, we must pass the LIPA Public Power Act in the NYS legislature. It provides the necessary solution to our current failed model by enabling the Long Island Power Authority to manage the utility's operations itself with real community input."

Senator Sanders extends his heartfelt gratitude to all community partners, with special thanks to the National Wildlife Federation, New York City Department of Parks &

Recreation (NYC Parks), NY Renews, The Long Island Progressive Coalition (LIPC), Queenslink, NYC Plover Project, New York Sustainable Business Council, Black Surfing Association, and the New York Solar Energy Industries Association (NYSEIA) for their contributions, participation, and inspiring speeches that solidified the community's commitment to environmental action. He also expresses particular appreciation to the Campaign Against Hunger for their delicious contributions and NYSEIA for their generous sponsorship of the breakfast.

###