



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

Senator Brad Hoylman Convenes Panel of Experts to Address Climate Change in New York

BRAD HOYLMAN May 19, 2015

| ISSUE: **ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE**



Forum comes as members of Senate Republican Conference question the existence of man-made climate change

Hoylman: “Global climate change is a looming catastrophe for the planet and threatens the well being and livelihood of current and future generations of New Yorkers.”

ALBANY – State Senator Brad Hoylman (D-Manhattan) today convened a panel of scientific experts, environmental advocates, and New York residents and farmers to address the issue

of climate change and determine what steps need to be taken to ensure New York is a global leader in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Hoylman, who is the Ranking Member of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, organized the public forum as some members of the Senate Republican Conference have openly questioned the existence of man-made climate change.

Currently, New York's climate action plan calls for an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Experts at today's forum will examine New York's progress thus far and determine additional actions the state needs take to effectively combat this crisis, such as identifying metrics that will help ensure proper execution.

State Senator Brad Hoylman said: "Just this week, NASA reports that an Antarctic ice shelf half the size of Rhode Island will disintegrate within the next few years. Global climate change is a looming catastrophe for the planet and threatens the well being and livelihood of current and future generations of New Yorkers. For our kids' sake, it's imperative New York act now to develop a transparent, comprehensive plan to address the root causes of global warming and establish benchmarks so we can quantify our progress in reducing carbon emissions."

Attorney General Eric Schneiderman said: "Climate change is a reality, and it is having a real impact here in New York. From the catastrophic flooding caused in the Catskills and Adirondacks by Hurricanes Irene, in the Southern Tier by tropical Storm Lee, and in Long Island last summer when 13.5 inches of rain fell in a few hours, we are seeing how increasingly violent and extreme weather costs us dearly, in damages and in lives. That's why my office has worked aggressively and creatively to curb greenhouse emissions and protect critical infrastructure from a changing climate. The time has come to recognize the reality of climate change – and join together to meet its challenge and ensure a safer,

healthier, more sustainable future for New Yorkers.”

Peter Iwanowicz, Executive Director of Environmental Advocates of New York said: “The science is settled, the necessary courses of action are clear, and New Yorkers cannot afford for our government to sit idly by as carbon pollution leads to increasingly erratic storms and weather patterns. Inaction puts lives at risk. Today’s public forum came at an uncomfortable but critical time for our state. The new Senate leader sounds like a climate denier, while the last was an alleged climate profiteer. And five years into office, Governor Cuomo has failed to deliver a climate action plan. Environmental Advocates applauds Senator Hoylman for taking the lead on this important issue, and looks forward to working with him to make climate action an issue state leaders cannot ignore.”

Dr. Radley Horton, Associate Research Scientist at the Center for Climate Systems Research at the Columbia University Earth Institute, said: "Climate change, due to human activities, is already impacting New York State. As sea levels and average temperatures continue to rise, we could see a tripling of the frequency of both coastal flooding and extreme heat events. However, there are steps we can take to both avoid the most extreme climate changes -- by reducing our greenhouse gas emissions -- and adapt to those climate changes that are inevitable."

Richard Schrader, New York Political and Legislative Director for the Natural Resources Defense Council said: "New York's most immediate and effective response to the looming climate change crisis is to expand Governor Cuomo's green energy programs quickly and commit to them for the long term. Solar, wind and other renewable energy sources can not only help us avoid climate change's worst impacts, build also build a skilled workforce, create good-paying jobs and nurture local businesses."

Jessica Ottney Mahar, Director of Government Relations for The Nature Conservancy in New York, said: "Climate change is already beginning to transform life on Earth. Around the globe, seasons are shifting, temperatures are climbing and sea levels are rising. And meanwhile, our

planet must still supply us – and all living things – with air, water, food and safe places to live. We have been proud to work with New York State to advance policies that both mitigate climate changing pollution and help our communities become more resilient to extreme weather. We thank Senator Hoylman for inviting us to this forum, and for continuing the conversation about how New York can continue to lead and innovate to address this serious threat."

Leandra Requena, leader of Make the Road New York, said: "Man made climate change has created an unstable environment that has contributed to the displacement of thousands of families in New York City during Hurricane Sandy. We applaud Senator Hoylman for convening this forum and pushing our State to take a strong look at building a greener and more sustainable New York for all."

Victor Nazario, a 32BJ SEIU member and green superintendent in Manhattan, said: "We see this as a critical time, to not only acknowledge climate change is real, but also as an opportunity to change the trajectory of how we contribute to climate change. We as a state have the unique opportunity to create good jobs as we combat climate change-good union jobs."

Rachel Rivera, NYCC member from Brooklyn, said: "When my daughter and I left our collapsing apartment for an emergency shelter during Superstorm Sandy, we had only the clothes on our backs. The experience was a nightmare, but it was also just a preview of what people will have to deal with if we don't take action on Climate Change right now. It's time for Albany to take sides: are you with the victims of climate change or are you with the major polluting oil corporations? We are eagerly awaiting the answer."

Today's forum featured scientific experts, environmental advocates and New York residents impacted by climate change. Speakers included Dr. Radley Horton, Associate Research Scientist, Center for Climate Systems Research, Columbia University Earth Institute; Alan

Belenz, Chief Scientist, Office of the Attorney General; Peter Iwanowicz, Executive Director of Environmental Advocates of New York; Richard Schrader, Legislative Director of the Natural Resources Defense Council; Jessica Ottney Mahar, Director of Government Relations for The Nature Conservancy; and Leandra Requena, Victor Nazario and Rachel Rivera, New York residents impacted by climate change.

Senator Hoylman was joined at the forum by his colleagues Senators Liz Krueger, Bill Perkins and Daniel Squadron.

###