



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daniel L. Squadron

Squadron, Senate Democrats Fight Climate Change

DANIEL L. SQUADRON June 1, 2016

| ISSUE: **ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE, GREEN INITIATIVES, SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**



Policy Group Proposals Include 100% Reduction in Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 2050 and Blocking Future Raids of Environmental Protection Funds
Initiatives Build On Climate Forum That Highlighted Need for Action

(Albany, NY) The Senate Democratic Conference today unveiled a plan to address climate change in New York State. Included in the plan, produced by the Democratic Policy Group, are proposals to achieve a 100% reduction in human-caused greenhouse gas emissions below

1990 levels by 2050 as well as a proposal to block any future sweeps or raids of environmental protection funds to ensure these resources are used to combat climate change and grow the green economy. These initiatives build on a Policy Group Climate Action Forum that highlighted the need for urgent action on climate change and are part of the Senate Democrats' ongoing commitment to fight climate change despite the Senate Republican Majority's refusal to recognize this critical issue.

"State government has a responsibility to truly address the causes of climate change and prepare our communities for its impacts," **Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins** said. "Safeguarding our environment is not only the right thing to do, it is the economic thing to do and will result in thousands of new, green jobs. Through bold actions and commitment, New York can take the lead in the green economy and serve as an example to the rest of the nation."

Senator Daniel Squadron, Chair of the Senate Democratic Policy Group, said, "The impacts of climate change are already being felt by New Yorkers across the state, and that demands climate action. But far too often, climate change has been put on the back-burner or even denied by the Senate Majority. Building on our climate action forum, the initiatives announced today will reduce greenhouse emissions and strengthen state environmental commitments. I thank Leader Stewart-Cousins, Environmental Conservation Ranking Member Senator Hoylman, Policy Group members Senators Latimer, Montgomery, and Serrano, the Democratic Conference, and the climate action forum's panelists."

Senator Brad Hoylman, Environmental Conservation Committee Ranking Member, said, "Global climate change is a looming catastrophe for our planet, threatening the health of our state and the lives of future generations. Last month's record-setting heat was just the latest in a 12-month streak of historic global temperatures. And while, thanks to the Governor, New York has made great strides on this issue in the last year, Republicans in both houses of the

Legislature continue to delay and deny. Time is of the essence; we cannot continue to willfully ignore the danger posed by our changing climate. That's why I'm thankful to Conference Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Chair of the Democratic Policy Group Daniel Squadron, and the rest of my Democratic colleagues for their commitment to addressing the issues of human-induced climate change.”

The Senate Democrats' climate action plan includes initiatives to:

- Truly address climate change by targeting achievement of a 100% reduction in human-caused greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and increasing utility energy efficiency goals to levels achieved by other states
- Lock EPF and RGGI to protect those funds from sweeps
- Legislatively enact state climate commitments and the planning necessary to achieve those commitments, as in other states
- Legislatively strengthen green practices at state agencies and climate neutrality goals for SUNY and CUNY
- Evaluate and report on progress toward climate change goals to ensure headway in meeting those goals

The report and the climate action plan was the result of a Climate Action Forum presented by the Senate Democratic Conference held on May 24, 2016. It was hosted by Policy Group Chair Senator Daniel Squadron, Policy Group members and Senator Brad Hoylman, Ranking Member Environmental Conservation Committee. The expert panelists included Peter Iwanowicz, Executive Director of Environmental Advocates, Richard Schraeder, Political and Legislative Director of the Urban Program, NRDC and David O. Carpenter, M.D., Director,

Institute for Health and the Environment at the University at Albany.

Members of the Senate Republican Majority have refused to acknowledge the scientifically proven existence of climate change and have even gone as far as questioning whether it is real. Republican Majority Leader John Flanagan and Deputy Leader John DeFrancisco, both climate change deniers, have come under fire for their controversial statements on climate change and lack of acceptance on the issue. The Senate Republican Majority has been resistant to addressing climate change despite major natural disasters in New York State that have cost lives, destroyed homes and devastated communities from Long Island to Buffalo.

Senator George Latimer, Democratic Policy Group member, said, “We have to stop thinking in terms of legislating for the next year and start thinking about legislating for the next generation. Intelligent environmental policy today will help us survive hostile realities in the world of tomorrow.”

Senator Velmanette Montgomery, Democratic Policy Group member, said, “The consequences of human-induced climate change threaten New Yorkers from Brooklyn to Buffalo; the lives and homes already lost from the increasingly severe weather and extreme temperatures are far too many. The legislative climate change action plan outlined by the Policy Group details the action and accountability paramount to protecting public health and safeguarding the environment of New York State and our regional allies.”

Senator José Serrano, Democratic Policy Group member, said, “The need to act decisively against climate change has never been greater and New York should lead the way on this issue. In the past few years alone, New Yorkers have lived through Hurricanes Irene, Lee and Sandy and these storms are very likely the new normal. The devastating impacts these storms had on our state should recommit us all to combat human-induced climate change.”

The Democratic Policy Group was formed by Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins to develop policy initiatives and work with the Conference to introduce related legislation focused on affordability across the state, job creation, meaningful tax and mandate reform, and closing the upstate/downstate economic divide. The Policy Group is headed by Senator Daniel Squadron and includes Senators George Latimer, Velmanette Montgomery and José Serrano. The group works with members to identify, study, and act on identified needs. Findings and recommendations have been published as white papers that help guide legislative action. Previous Policy Group white papers and action plans include:

- Upstate Left Behind: Job Loss, Policy Challenges, and a New Path to Create Jobs Across New York State:

<https://www.scribd.com/doc/293359176/Upstate-Left-Behind-Job-Loss-Policy-Challenges-and-a-New-Path-to-Create-Jobs-Across-New-York-State>

- Pre-Natal to Pre-K: Supporting New York's Young Families: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/298706186/White-Paper-Pre-Natal-to-Pre-K-Supporting-New-York-s-Young-Families>

- College in New York State: Affordability and Success: <https://www.scribd.com/doc/311741193/White-Paper-College-in-NYS-Affordability-and-Success>

For a full copy of the Senate Democratic Conference Policy Group's report, 'A Legislative Climate Action Plan for New York State', please visit: <https://www.scribd.com/doc/314475604/Report-A-Legislative-Climate-Action-Plan-for-New-York-State>

Deputy Senate Democratic Leader Michael Gianaris said, "Despite what deniers believe, climate change is happening and it is already impacting our state. We have a responsibility to act decisively to address this situation immediately. One step that can be easily taken is my proposal to stop raiding RGGI funds and instead ensure these resources are used to curb

greenhouse gases and encourage green energy options. That action, combined with the common sense plans outlined by the Senate Democratic Conference, will help combat climate change and better protect our natural resources and environment.”

Senator Joe Addabbo said, “Climate change is not a partisan, political issue: it affects our planet and our entire global population in very fundamental and increasingly more threatening ways. That is one of the reasons I am continuing to sponsor legislation (S.3001) to establish a New York State Climate Change Task Force. This panel would assess the impact of these serious and continuing environmental changes on our infrastructure, agriculture, coastal communities, tourism industry, and other state resources, while developing a comprehensive plan to both reduce further degradation and better prepare the people of New York to meet the challenges of living with the effects of climate change now and in the future.”

Senator Leroy Comrie said, “Sadly, climate change has become a reality that has been having devastating effects on many of our local communities. New York State needs to lead the charge with sound policies that provide the infrastructure and resources in order to stave off the ill effects of fossil fuels. We must focus on real results and plans for affordable clean energy while working to create sustainable jobs for residents within the green industries and technologies. The world is looking to for us to lead the way.”

Senator Martin Malavé Dilan said, “Taking a page from the transportation playbook, we know decades of raiding dedicated funds for roads and bridges has left them in disrepair. Almost a decade ago we made a similar financial and ethical commitment to our environment. We have failed to live up to that commitment. Ultimately, we can rebuild and repair infrastructure; the same cannot be said for our environment. If we continue to neglect our responsibility to the generations to come, no measure of intervention, on their part or ours, can undo the damage we have done.”

Senator Jesse Hamilton said, “This Climate Action Plan presents the kind of bold, cross-cutting policy proposals that address the significant challenge climate change poses. Given our experience with Superstorm Sandy and the threat of even stronger hurricanes hitting the Atlantic seaboard, we need to be especially committed to confronting climate change. These proposals weave environmental awareness into our policy - locking in commitments, setting real emissions targets, and challenging government to do more. I am proud to join my Senate Democratic Conference colleagues in putting forward proposals so New York leads the way to combat climate change.”

Senator Liz Krueger said, “It’s not too late to avoid the worst effects of climate change, but we have to act boldly and we have to act now. As New Yorkers, we know how to face great challenges. We don’t back down or retreat into denial – we come together and meet those challenges head on. New York can and must be a national leader on the path to a clean energy future, and I and my Senate Democratic colleagues are committed to taking the necessary steps to prevent climate catastrophe.”

Senator Kevin Parker said, “The time has come for public officials on both sides of the aisle to be ambitious in setting concrete goals toward bringing about a sustainable energy future for our State. Today, I am proud to stand with my Democratic colleagues in articulating the proposals as contained in the report created by the Senate Democratic Policy Group. Investing in renewable energy sources is undoubtedly the best way to reduce our carbon footprint while simultaneously providing working families with good paying jobs through the new “green collar economy.” This climate action plan accelerates our move toward this, and further ensures New York State’s position as an advocate for the environment.”

Senator Bill Perkins said, “I applaud Democratic Conference Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and all my colleagues in the Democratic Policy Group for forwarding an actionable and progressive plan that will forever address climate change in New York State. Making

meaningful progress on this essential human rights issue of our time has been long overdue and it is imperative that we use this action plan to not only combat the issue of climate change but to essentially create more jobs for New Yorkers, improve our shared quality of life, and generate savings for the state. I look forward to witnessing the full implementation of this climate action plan—as I am certain that this initiative will empower New Yorkers to take leadership in the green economy as well as addressing the issue of climate change once and for all.”

Senator James Sanders said, “The science conclusively tells us climate change is a real problem we need to address now. New York must be a leader in this area. Making more ecologically correct decisions not only helps preserve the environment, but it presents an opportunity to grow our economy by creating good paying jobs.”

Senator Toby Ann Stavisky said, “Climate change is real, and the amount of scientific evidence proving how much of a threat it poses is staggering. We can no longer afford to ignore this global issue that goes beyond politics. I am so glad to join my colleagues in the Senate Democratic Conference taking this problem head-on by unveiling a climate action plan that can offer significant changes and improvements to our environment, air quality and way of life. I can only hope that, after the devastating storms that have hit our state, the Senate Republicans acknowledge the danger of climate change and stand with us to make a better and greener New York.”