



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

## Harckham Proposes Creation of a Climate and Community Protection Fund

PETE HARCKHAM March 3, 2023

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*Albany, NY* – New York State Senator Pete Harckham announced today that he has introduced new legislation to create a Climate and Community Protection Fund (CCPF) that will finance the work of implementing the climate, jobs, and justice provisions of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) passed by the New York State Legislature and enacted in 2019.

The new law ([S.5360](#)) will ensure legislative oversight in appropriating funds to implement the CLCPA's community-centered vision and provide transparency and flexibility in year-to-year climate appropriations; keep funding on budget so that the legislature can track spending and require reporting;

and provide a democratic process for directing funds to specific spending programs with strong climate and climate justice impacts.

“The revenues from any Cap and Invest plan need to be directed toward meaningful and equitable climate and community programs rather than just sent to the state’s General Fund,” said Harckham. “We need a strong commitment to transitioning the state’s economy to clean energy, growing new union jobs and restoring environmental justice to disadvantaged communities.”

Harckham added, “All of this is going to require both a significant investment as well as a strong, transparent, fair, and community-focused spending plan. That’s why my office introduced legislation to establish the Climate and Community Protection Fund in partnership with NY Renews, a statewide coalition representing hundreds of thousands of environmental justice, community-based, labor, faith, business, and youth organizations from across the state.”

A key provision of the legislation, Harckham noted, is that it incorporates robust labor standards, such as prevailing wage requirements, buy U.S. procurement standards, and protection of benefits, wages and collective bargaining power.

Modeled upon the Environmental Protection Fund, Harckham’s bill to create the CCPF will include four separate accounts:

- Climate, Jobs, and Infrastructure: directs funding to programs for increasing building efficiency, updating our energy infrastructure and expanding public transit upstate and on Long Island;
- Community-Directed Climate Solutions: directs grants to community organizations for grassroots-led energy planning and reducing local emissions;
- Community and Worker Transition Assistance: funds programs providing direct support to job training for impacted workers, funds to replace lost tax revenue for municipalities and school districts, as well as expanded economic development programs;
- Energy Affordability: directs funding to rebate programs alongside additional measures to assist low and moderate-income families and small businesses to reduce the burden of energy costs while lowering emissions.

In addition to establishing the accounts for the purposes above, the CCPF directs the New York State Energy Research Authority (NYSERDA) to establish an Office of Equity for Energy and Environment to

administer grants from the Community-Directed Climate Solutions account. The fund also creates a Gap Funding Program to address health and safety issues in existing buildings prior to weatherization and efficiency measures, and develops an equitable Climate Rebate program.

Finally, Harckham's CCPF bill will require that at least 75% of funding supports projects located within disadvantaged communities. Up to 25% of funding may support projects outside of disadvantaged communities, if such funding provides a broader benefit to disadvantaged communities, including that of reducing pollution and energy costs, or increasing disadvantaged community ownership or governance of energy infrastructure. One year after the CCPF bill is enacted, and then annually, the Office of Equity for Energy and Environment shall submit a report to a climate justice working group on the use of funds in the Community-Directed Climate Solutions account and its grants program.

Katherine Nadeau, deputy director of Catskill Mountainkeeper, said, "The Climate and Community Protection Fund is a game-changer for climate justice funding in New York State. The law will democratize investments in buildings, businesses, and communities from Montauk to Buffalo, Plattsburgh to Delhi. It puts polluters' dollars and taxpayers' hard-earned money to work to support thriving, healthy communities, affordable energy, and family-supporting union jobs. Catskill Mountainkeeper is proud to support the CCPF, alongside the hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers represented by the over 340 organizations in the NY Renews coalition."

Eddie Bautista, executive director of New York City Environmental Justice Alliance (NYC-EJA), said, "The New York City Environmental Justice Alliance commends Senator Harckham for introducing the Climate and Community Protection Fund. This bill can ensure an equitable and just transition towards renewable energy and storage to replace fossil fuel infrastructure. The CCPF will establish dedicated funds and accounts within the NYS budget that will be crucial for the implementation of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. The CCPF will help prioritize climate jobs and infrastructure while assisting low and moderate-income families to reduce the burden of energy costs while simultaneously reducing emissions. On behalf of environmental justice communities, NYC-EJA is calling on elected officials to help pass the CCPF to further investments in communities that are most burdened by the climate crisis."

Dariella Rodriguez, director of community development at The Point Community Development Corporation, said, "New York's Black, Brown, Indigenous and working-class communities—communities disproportionately impacted by extreme weather, toxic pollution and skyrocketing energy bills—deserve to take the lead in New York's clean energy future. The Climate and Community Protection Fund would empower neighborhoods from the Bronx to Buffalo to enact grassroots-led energy plans, climate resiliency programs and clean energy jobs training, while lowering energy bills for low- and middle-income families.

New Yorkers deserve to live in healthy, thriving communities; the CCPF is a key step in securing climate and environmental justice for New York State.”

Nadeau, Bautista and Rodriguez are members of the NY Renews Steering Committee.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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## 2023-S5360

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Establishes the office of equity for energy and climate

March 02, 2023

In Senate Committee [Environmental Conservation](#)

Sponsored by **Pete Harckham**

Do you support this bill?