



**NY RENEWS**

**TESTIMONY OF STEPHAN EDEL, NY RENEWS**

**BEFORE THE JOINT BUDGET HEARING ON ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION**

**January 28, 2025**

NY Renews is a multi-sectoral coalition consisting of nearly 400 member organizations across New York State, and the driving force behind the nation's most ambitious and progressive climate law, the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA). Our governance is shaped by a diverse range of member organizations, including those focused on environmental justice, community organizing, labor, faith, youth, business, housing justice, and more across New York State.

Among the many vital issues in this year's budget, one of the most important is the direction of the state's efforts on climate change and the hundreds of billions of dollars needed for climate mitigation, adaptation, energy transition, and economic development to support communities impacted by climate change. The Legislature and the Governor were responsive to the needs last session when it comes to remediation and resiliency (i.e., past harms and protecting our infrastructure against future harms) when you passed the Climate Change Superfund Act and the Governor signed it. We would welcome the opportunity to suggest ways to raise revenue in an equitable manner to generate the billions needed for energy transition and the related work that needs to be done, like building affordable green housing.

**The Urgency of This Moment**

Earlier this month, Governor Kathy Hochul released her 2025 State of the State and the proposed annual state budget. Meanwhile, much of Southern California continued to burn and communities across New York were still recovering from unprecedented wildfires and extreme weather. And in between these events, a new administration was sworn in nationally, one that is actively hostile to climate action. In her release, the Governor claimed that New York was leading on climate, stating, "Acknowledging that the cost of inaction greatly outweighs the cost of any actions we can take together, New York will continue to pursue an aggressive agenda in transitioning to a sustainable green energy economy, in a way that is both environmentally effective and economically affordable for all New Yorkers." However, the State of the State policy proposals and the Executive Budget failed to even include the initiatives her administration had been supporting for years. In a last-minute shift, the Governor seemed to mislead both the legislature and public, claiming progress on climate action while undermining years of work to advance the CLCPA and secure the necessary funding.

## The Impacts of Climate Change Are Increasingly Severe and Already Here In New York

- **Rising Sea Levels**
  - These not only cause flooding but also bring about increasingly serious challenges in maintaining safe, usable water and functioning infrastructure.
  - Infrastructure Damage: Rising sea levels threaten critical infrastructure, such as subway systems, airports, and power plants.
- **Heatwaves and Extreme Weather**
  - Heat-Related Illnesses: More frequent and intense heatwaves pose severe health risks, especially for vulnerable populations like the elderly, children, and people with pre-existing health conditions. Extreme temperatures can lead to heat exhaustion, heat stroke, and other life-threatening illnesses. New Yorkers are literally dying from the heat.
  - Power Outages: Extreme heat can lead to increased demand for air conditioning, putting a strain on the power grid and causing outages. These outages have now become routine in many areas of New York and are becoming increasingly common. (Source: New York Independent System Operator)
- **Changes in Precipitation Patterns**
  - Floods and Droughts: Shifts in precipitation patterns are causing more frequent flash floods and prolonged droughts. (Source: New York State Climate Office)
  - Impacts on the Tourism Industry: These changes are raising costs and disrupting skiing and other winter sports, while also creating safety concerns and additional challenges for hiking and other summer activities.
- **Invasive Species and Diseases**
  - Ecological Disruption: Warmer temperatures enable invasive species to thrive, displacing native wildlife. (Source: The Nature Conservancy)
  - Vector-Borne Diseases: Expanding tick and mosquito habitats increase the risk of diseases like Lyme disease and West Nile virus. (Source: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation)
- **Air Quality Degradation**
  - Smog and Pollution: Higher temperatures and more frequent heatwaves contribute to increased concentrations of ground-level ozone and particulate matter. (Source: New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene)
  - Health Impacts: Poor air quality exacerbates respiratory diseases. For instance, asthma has led to increased hospitalizations, affecting about 10.0 percent (more than 400,000) of children and 9.9 percent (more than 1.5 million) of adults in New York. There has also been a considerable impact on school absenteeism and missed days of work. (Source: New York State Department of Health and the American Lung Association)
- **Economic Impacts**
  - Tourism: Changing weather patterns may disrupt peak tourism seasons, negatively impacting local economies. (Source: New York State Department of Economic Development)

- Infrastructure Costs: Adapting and reinforcing infrastructure to withstand climate change impacts will require significant investments. (Source: New York State Energy Research and Development Authority)
- Agricultural Impacts: Unpredictable weather reduces crop yields and farm revenues across the state. (Source: Cornell University)
- Migration and Immigration: Irregular and unpredictable migration patterns are creating less stable communities.

## **Upholding the Nation-Leading Standards of New York’s Climate Law Will Make New York More Affordable and Improve Public Health and Safety**

I would like to begin by highlighting one key issue. Early on, the legislature—particularly the Assembly—fought to protect the integrity and strength of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA), securing meaningful victories for our communities and climate efforts. Unfortunately, the issue I am here to testify about is a threat to a key victory. The CLCPA incorporates strong science-based standards and definitions, including specific accounting for methane and strong processes for defining Disadvantaged Communities (DAC). However, the Governor's budget language contains several points that aim to undermine New York State’s definitions and directions. These points suggest the administration intends to move New York away from our strong standards and adopt weaker mandates, all in the name of administrative convenience and in an effort to align with other states and the EPA. There is no reason why New York cannot or should not lead the nation by enforcing more effective standards than those set by an EPA constrained by a conservative Congress or even the standards used in New Hampshire or Connecticut. Loosening standards would imperil the lives of New Yorkers for the sake of administrative ease. If we want to meaningfully address the climate crisis and health-damaging pollution in New York State, we need to aggressively protect the standards in the CLCPA.

## **The 2025-2026 Budget is a Tremendous Opportunity**

If done right, that means cleaner air, more healthy thriving communities, and increased revenue to spend on infrastructure and the climate transition. The New York State legislature must take the lead in developing this program by addressing the vagueness and shortcomings in the Governor's Executive Budget Proposal. Most importantly, it must ensure that the final program protects Disadvantaged and Environmental Justice Communities and creates visible benefits for their constituencies. Establishing a transparent and accountable process for climate spending and economic development is crucial, as is ramping up investment and creating programs now, even before the cap and invest system is officially in place. This is a key opportunity to improve affordability, public health, safety, and energy systems.

## **Rapid Action to Decarbonize Is Not Only Necessary—It Will Also Benefit the State Economy**

Nearly every analysis shows that shifting away from fossil fuels will have a dramatic net benefit to New York State’s economy. At this very moment, we send more than \$39 billion out of state for fossil fuels—funds that could have been reinvested into benefiting our communities, rather than fueling record profits for out-of-state oil companies. To reach the CLCPA’s ambitious mandates and decarbonization goals, we need to see investments into market conditions that scale up solutions and ease climatic impacts but also invigorate the

states economy, such as decarbonizing and retrofitting the building sector. Building decarbonization is uniquely positioned to improve both tenant health and decrease bill costs, develop a new workforce that is knowledgeable and adept around new and energy efficient building technologies while also acting as direct evidence that the state can become early adopters of deep energy retrofits while meeting the gaps and needs in business operations; allowing the state, stakeholders and state residents to take advantage of the many benefits of these efforts. Investment into the efforts will be worth the end results.

*Rapid Action to Decarbonize Will Not Only Benefit the State Economy -- It Will Save Lives)*

I would be remiss if I did not also point out that these actions will literally save the lives of your constituents. Pollution reductions will save the lives of your most vulnerable constituents and have a greater benefit for Black and Brown communities, who bear the heaviest burdens. There is no legislative district in this state that does not have a disadvantaged community disproportionately suffering from pollution. Your communities are paying a heavy price—in health, healthcare costs, Medicaid, missed workdays and school days, more visits to the emergency room, lost productivity, and higher public health costs—all because of pollution.

### **There Are Meaningful Budgetary Actions That the State Can and Should Take**

There is an urgent need to have more funds available at this critical moment—and it's not by the millions, it is by the billions. Available state and federal funding is dwindling and the money that once seemed promising is now going away. Climate funding doesn't just touch upon environmental causes—it is an intersectional issue impacting multiple other sectors such as housing, transit, employment, education, physical and mental health and more. Without active available funds to bring about opportunities and drive development, the impact will be felt by everyone, not just a select few. This is a critical moment we cannot let slip away to secure more funding and make significant progress on the CLCPA.

### **What We Need To See the State Prioritize In Spending In This Budget**

- Move forward with Cap-and-Invest regulations or legislation to ensure that funds are available for this budget year.
- Ensure that climate funding from Cap-and-Invest or other sources is directed to the Climate Action Fund in this year's budget. This includes support funding for low- to moderate-income (LMI) households, creating new programs through the Climate Action Fund to help all New Yorkers access housing and building upgrades for decarbonization, and funding community-directed climate grants.
- In her budget address, the Governor called for at least \$1 billion in new funding to expand affordability and public safety through climate spending. The legislature should hold the Governor to that commitment and work with the administration to secure at least \$1 billion for the Climate Action Fund, even if it is not predicated on Cap-and-Invest funds anticipated for this year.
- Additionally, the legislature can continue to push for funding through the Climate Action Fund for specific line items, including:
  - Collaborating with government agencies and energy companies to fund:
    - Training for upskilling in the clean energy sector.

- Jobs, workshops, apprenticeships, and internships for people in disadvantaged communities (DACs).
- Collaborating with the transportation and technology sectors to advance:
  - Electric vehicle (EV) development and public transportation powered by clean energy.
  - Heat pumps development and promote their use.
  - Smart grid development for one that can reliably handle a greater electricity load.
- Work with the building sector to advance:
  - Building electrification and retrofits.
  - Stricter building codes that require buildings to become more energy efficient.
  - Upgrading low-income housing.
  - Upgrading homes and infrastructure to better withstand flooding and other severe weather events.

In conclusion, thank you for your attention and consideration. It is urgent that New York State continue to not just act, but lead, on climate change - it is an urgent health and safety threat to New Yorkers and only through aggressive legislative and budgetary action can our elected leaders protect their constituents, and with them the entire world.

Best Regards,

**Stephan Edel**

NY Renews Executive Director;

On behalf of the NY Renews Steering Committee and Membership

Appendices:

Full list of members (the following page)

NY Renews [Fund Climate One-Pager](#) and [Cap and Invest One-Pager](#)

Recent Research Reports by Member organizations

- New York City Environmental Justice Alliance and Resources for the Future joint report; [New York State's Cap-Trade-and-Invest Program Can Financially Benefit Many Households](#)
- NY Renews and New York Lawyers for the Public Interest joint report; [Flouting the Law - Major State Agencies are New York's Climate Mandates](#)



## NY RENEWS

NY Renews is a statewide coalition of nearly 400 groups that was the moving force behind the 2019 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA). NY Renews is a multi-sector climate, jobs, and justice coalition working towards action on climate, jobs, and justice. In all parts of NY State, our members represent hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers from every constituency in the state, including community groups, environmental justice groups, labor unions, environmental organizations, businesses, faith organizations, and more. For more information contact us at [info@nyrenews.org](mailto:info@nyrenews.org) NY Renews is coordinated by a Steering Committee, indicated in bold.

2811	Binghamton Regional Sustainability
21C4E Inc.	Coalition
32BJ SEIU	BiotoxinFoundation.org
350 Capital Region	BK ROT
350 Plattsburgh	Brightest
350.org	Brooklyn Movement Center
350Brooklyn	Brooklyn Progressive Alliance
350NYC	Brooklyn Resisters
A Better Way	Buddhist Action Coalition - Upper
Action Corps NYC	Hudson & Berkshires
<b>ALIGN - NY Alliance for A Greater</b>	Build A Better Planet
<b>NY</b>	Business Forward
Alive Structures	C4 - Christians Concerned About
All Our Energy	Climate Change
All SoulsNYC climate Justice	C4   Christians Concerned About
Alliance for a Green Economy	Climate Change
Alliance for Climate Education	Campaign for Renewable Energy
Aurorans for Climate and Energy Sense	Capital District DSA (formerly Albany
(ACES)	DSA)
AVillage, Inc.	Capital NYPAN (formerly The Bernie
Aytzim: Ecological Judaism	Sanders Network)
Basilica Hudson	Capital Region Interfaith Creation Care
Bay Ridge Environmental Group	Coalition
Big Reuse	Carroll Gardens Association

**Catskill Mountainkeeper**

CD17Indivisible

Center for Bioregional Living

Center for disaster resilient solutions

501(c)(3)

Center for Earth Ethics

Center for Popular Democracy

Center for Social Inclusion

**Center For Working Families / NY**

**Working Families**

Central Brooklyn Independent

Democrats

Central New York Citizen in Action, Inc.

Central Synagogue

**Citizen Action of New York**

Citizens Climate Lobby Albany Chapter

Citizens for Local Power

Citizens' Climate Lobby NY Legislative

Team

Citizens' Climate Lobby Rochester

Chapter

City Island Rising

City Island Rising, Inc.

Clean Air Coalition of Coeymans Rave

Clean Air Coalition of Greater Raveva

and Coeymans

Clean and Healthy New York

Clean Energy Technology Resources,

LLC

Cleaner Oceans Institute

Cleanup North Brooklyn

Climate Action Mondays

Climate Change Awareness & Action

Climate Change Working Group of

Indivisible Mohawk Valley

Climate Changers

Climate Hawks Vote

Climate Justice Coalition of WNY

Climate Justice Committee of CNY

Solidarity .org

Climate Justice Cornell

Climate Reality Project, Finger Lakes

Greater Region NY Chapter

Climate Reality Project: Northern

Adirondack Region, NY

Climate Realty Project, Chautauqua

County Chapter

Climate Science Communication for

Youth

Coalition for Economic Justice

Coalition for Sustainable Economic

Development

Coalition for Wetlands & Forest

College Democrats of New York

Colorbrightongreen.org

Common Energy

Communications Workers of America -

District 1

Communications Workers of America

Local 1108

Community Advocates for Sustainable

Environment

Community Voices Heard

Cooperative Economics Alliance of

NYC

Council of Municipal Retiree

Organizations of NYC -COMRO

Creation Care Committee of First

Reformed Church Schenectady

Creation Care Community in the

Episcopal Diocese of Long Island

Democratic Socialists of America- NYC

Chapter

Democratic Socialists of America:

Suffolk County Chapter

Demos

Draft Bernie New York

Drawdown NYC

Dutchess County Progressive Action

Alliance

Earth Celebrations  
Earthjustice  
East New York Restoration LDC  
El Batey Inc  
El Puente  
Emerald Cities Collaborative  
Empire State Indivisible  
Empire State Progressives  
Environment New York  
Environmental Action Coalition  
**Environmental Advocates of New York**  
Environmental Investigation Agency  
Environmental Justice Ministry of First Unitarian Church of Rochester  
Faith in New York  
Fast Food Justice  
Fifth Avenue Committee  
First Reformed Church of Schenectady  
Flower City Noire Collective  
**For the Many (Formerly Nobody Leaves Mid-Hudson)**  
Forest Hills High School Green Team  
Free the People WNY  
Fridays For Future NYC  
Friends of Columbia Solar  
Friends of the Earth U.S.  
Fruit Belt Community Land Trust  
GOLES  
Grassroots Gardens WNY  
Green Beacon Coalition  
Green Education and Legal Fund  
Green For All  
Green Owls  
Green Schools Alliance  
**GreenFaith**  
GreenFeen  
Greeningfullife  
GreeningUSA

GRID Alternatives  
Groundwork Buffalo  
HA:N UMC  
HabitatMap  
Haitian American Political Action Committee of New York , Inc  
Hamilton College Democrats  
Harlem Climate Caucus  
Hazon  
Hudson Center for Community and Environment  
Human Impacts Institute  
Humanists of Long Island  
HUMuS - Huntington Mobilization for Sustainability  
IBEW Local 11 Renew  
Indivisible Harlem  
Indivisible Hudson Valley  
Indivisible Nassau County  
Indivisible Nation BK  
Interfaith Climate Justice Community of WNY  
Interfaith Impact of NYS  
Inwood Indivisible  
Jewish Climate Action NYC  
Jobs to Move America  
Joule Community Power  
Judson Memorial Church  
Kinetic Communities Consulting Corporation  
La Plaza Cultural Community Garden  
Labor Religion Coalition of New York State  
Leaders of Environmental Awareness and Protection (LEAP)  
Liberty Renewables  
Life Sciences Secondary School  
Long Island Activists  
Long Island Jobs with Justice



**Long Island Progressive Coalition**

Make the Road New York  
Massachusetts Avenue Project  
Metro Justice  
Mid Hudson Valley DSA  
Mid Hudson Valley Sunrise  
MIHS FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE  
Millennials For Revolution  
Moms Clean Air Force  
Mothers on the Move  
Mothers Out Front  
Mountain Rise United Church of Christ  
Green climate Action Team  
Move Forward Staten Island  
Movement for a People's Party (formerly DraftBernie.org)  
Muslims for Progress  
NACA  
Nassau County Democratic Socialists of America  
Nassau Hiking & Outdoor Club  
National Association of Social Workers - NYS Chapter  
National Young Farmers Coalition  
New Economy Project  
New Paltz Climate Action Coalition  
New York Civil Liberties Union  
New York Climate Advocacy Project  
New York Indivisible  
New York Interfaith Power and Light  
**New York Lawyers for the Public Interest**  
New York Progressive Action Network  
New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG)  
New York State Council of Churches  
New York UU Justice  
New York Youth Climate Leaders  
New York Youth Climate Strike

Newport Ventures  
Newtown Creek Alliance  
NexGen WOWTech, llc  
Niagara Share  
North American Climate, Conservation and Environment(NACCE)  
North American Climate, Conservation and Environment(NACCE)  
North Brooklyn Neighbors  
North Brooklyn Neighbors  
Northern Power & Light, Inc  
Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition  
Northwest Bronx Indivisible  
NW Bronx Indivisible  
NY Small Farma  
NY02 Indivisible  
**NYC Environmental Justice Alliance**  
NYC H2O  
NYS ATU  
**NYSNA - NY State Nurses Association**  
NYU Divest  
One Queens Indivisible  
Open Buffalo  
Operation Resilient Living and Innovation, Plus  
**Our Climate**  
Our Power  
Partners for Climate Action  
Partnership for the Public Good  
Patagonia  
PEER: Progressive East End Reformers  
People of Albany United for Safe Energy - PAUSE  
People's Climate Movement-Capital Region  
**Peoples Climate Movement NY**  
Plant Pioneers  
Plus1Vote  
Power To The People

Progressive Schenectady  
Propel  
Protect Our Winters  
**PUSH Buffalo**  
Put A Price On It  
Queens Climate Project  
RAICA  
RAICA (Rochester Area Interfaith  
Climate Action  
RaisingVoicesUSA  
Regiven Environmental Project  
Renewable Energy Long Island  
RenewableEnergyCoalition.org  
RENewYorkCity  
Rensselaer Environmental Coalition  
Rescuing Leftover Cuisine  
Resource Generation NYC Chapter  
Retail, Wholesale & Department Store  
Union (RWDSU)  
ReWild Long Island  
Rise and Resist  
Riverdale-Yonkers Society for Ethical  
Culture  
Rivers & Mountains GreenFaith  
Rochester People's Climate Coalition  
ROCitizen  
Roctricity  
Sane Energy Project  
Saratoga Progressive Action  
Saratoga Unites  
SASE World Inc.  
**Sierra Club**  
Sisters of St. Joseph Brentwood NY  
Office of Justice, Peace, Integrity of  
Creation  
Sisters of St. Joseph Brentwood NY  
Office of Justice, Peace, Integrity of  
Creation  
Sixth Street Community Center

Social Justice Committee, UU  
Congregation at Shelter Rock  
Solar One  
Solidarity Committee of the Capital  
District  
Solstice  
Solutions Project  
South Bronx Unite  
South Shore Recovery Coalition/AAH  
Start:Empowerment  
Staten Island Urban Center  
Stop NY Fracked Gas Pipeline  
Suffolk Student Climate Action  
Committee  
Sun Ra Solar  
SunCommon  
Sunrise  
Sunrise Ithaca  
Sunrise Movement Hamilton College  
Sunrise Movement Long Island  
SUNY Plattsburgh Environmental  
Action Committee  
Sustainable Staten Island  
Sustainable Tompkins  
Sustainable Warwick  
SustainUS  
Swing Left Target 2020 (New York City)  
Syracuse United Neighbors  
Teamsters Joint Council 16  
The Climate Journal Project  
The Climate Reality Project New York  
City Metro Chapter  
The Climate Reality Project Peconic  
Region Chapter  
The Climate Reality Project Western  
New York Chapter  
The Climate Reality Project: Capital  
Region, NY Chapter  
The Elmont Cultural Center  
The Lower Eastside Girls Club of NY

The Metropolitan New York Synod  
The Morningside Hts/W. Harlem  
Sanitation Coalition, Inc.  
The People's Organizing Collective-  
USAS Local 3  
**THE POINT CDC**  
The Re-Earth Initiative  
The Rochester Youth Climate Leaders  
The WASH Project, Inc,  
Tishman Environment and Design  
Center  
Tompkins County Climate Protection  
Initiative  
Town of Kirkland Democratic  
Committee  
Transition Town Port Washington  
**TREEage**  
**Third Act Upstate New York**  
True Blue New York (TBNY)  
TWU local 100  
UAW Region 9  
Ujima Company, Inc.  
United Climate Action Network  
(UCAN)  
United University Professions  
**UPROSE**  
Urban Chamber of Commerce  
Urban League of Rochester  
VOICE Buffalo  
Vokashi, Inc.  
Vote Solar  
Wakanda Alliance Program  
Waterfront Alliance  
WE ACT for Environmental Justice  
Western N.Y. Council on Occupational  
Safety & Health  
Western New York Environmental  
Alliance  
Western New York Youth Climate  
Council

Western NY Council on Occupational  
Safety & Health