

Testimony before the Environmental Conservation Committees of the New York State Senate and Assembly

Regarding the Governor's Proposed Budget for Fiscal year 2018

By Kathleen Curtis, LPN, Executive Director

February 13, 2017

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the Governor's draft budget for fiscal year 2018. My name is Kathleen Curtis. I am the executive director of Clean and Healthy New York, which promotes safer chemicals, a sustainable economy, and a healthier world.

Today, I would like to focus my comments on two areas:

- 1) Support for the \$300 million Environmental Protection Fund and specific line items; and
- 2) Support for expanded funding for staff at the Department of Environmental Conservation to ensure laws passed by the legislature to protect New Yorkers from health and environmental degradation are fully implemented.

Support for the Environmental Protection Fund and Specific Line Items

Clean and Healthy New York unreservedly supports continued funding of the Environmental Protection Fund at \$300 million. This fund provides much needed resources to many projects that benefit our state and make it a better place to live. Within that funding we support allocations for:

- **Explicit funding for fire fighter disposal of perfluorinated compounds.** Perfluorinated compounds have been found in drinking water supplies, and fire fighting foam is one of the primary sources. There are safer materials to use during trainings. Fire fighters need a safe way to handle this hazardous waste.
- **New York State Pollution Prevention Institute (NYS P2I).** The NYS P2I has built a strong track record of helping New York's businesses become more sustainable, using and releasing fewer toxic chemicals, and reducing energy and water consumption. They provide technical assistance, help companies address environmental impacts of the supply chain, help new green technologies move to market, support community programs promoting pollution prevention. They are poised to play an increased role of helping companies reduce hazardous wastes, based on the companies' hazardous waste minimization plans submitted to the Department of Environmental Conservation. New York State's investment in this program both improves our environment and strengthens our economy. We support direct funding to the NYS Pollution Prevention Institute in the amount of \$4 million, without removing funds for the Interstate Chemicals Clearinghouse, which we also support. This requires a change in the Governor's proposed budget (see below).
- **Interstate Chemicals Clearinghouse (IC2).** The IC2 is a collaboration of state and municipal government agencies. It leverages the resources of participating states to provide

information about chemicals of concern, when they are reported in children's products, according to state-mandated databases from Washington, Oregon, and Vermont. IC2 provides technical assistance to states, including New York, on matters related to chemicals of concern, data collection, and alternatives assessment. New York State has invested in this program for many years, and should continue to do so. In the past, it has been supported within the Pollution Prevention Institute budget. This year, it was given an explicit line item, though still as a subset of the NYS P2I. CHNY fully endorses our state's support of this program explicit within the Environmental Protection Fund in the FY 2018 budget. We also support increased funding, as the Interstate Chemicals Clearinghouse is poised to be the public repository of the Household Cleaning Product Ingredient disclosure discussed below. However, we do not believe an increase in support for the IC2 should mean a decrease in funds for our in-state Pollution Prevention Institute. We support increasing the total Pollution Prevention Institute funding from \$4 million to \$4.25 million, and adjusting Environmental Health funding line item to \$6.75 million instead of \$7 million.

- **Children's Environmental Health Centers of Excellence.** We support ongoing funding for these Centers, and believe the portion of their resources in the Environmental Health line item should be doubled to \$4 million. This would ensure adequate funding for both the Children's Environmental Health Centers of Excellence and a host of programs we can envision for environmental health that would make New York a better state in which to live. These are miniscule costs compared with the potential benefits – Dr. Phil Landrigan and others at Mt. Sinai School of Medicine have calculated conservatively that diseases of environmental origin cost the state of New York \$4.35 *billion* each year. If actions carried out under a \$4 million budget in the Environmental Protection Fund reduced these diseases by one tenth of one percent, it would pay for itself.
- **Environmental Health funding.** CHNY supports the allocation of resources for environmental health in the Environmental Protection Fund at \$6.75 million. In addition to funding the Children's Environmental Health Centers, these resources would provide capital support to testing and accountability measures regarding harmful chemicals in New Yorkers' daily environments.

Support for Department of Environmental Conservation Funding

We strongly support Governor Cuomo's announcement that New York State will move forward with requiring cleaning product makers to disclose the chemicals that comprise their products, as authorized under a law passed in the 1970s. We also support evaluating this effort as a potential model or pilot for ingredient disclosure in other product sectors. This program requires at a minimum one Environmental Analyst I position within the Pollution Prevention Unit at the Department of Environmental Conservation, to oversee reporting, address questions, engage smaller businesses (particularly those based in our state), and make any necessary determinations for New York State. While the Interstate Chemicals Clearinghouse can provide significant support to New York for this new reporting initiative, a representative of New York State is necessary to implement this ground-breaking program.

Clean and Healthy New York co-leads the statewide coalition of the JustGreen Partnership, which works for environmental health and justice for New York's people and communities. We are attaching the Partnership's budget priorities as an addendum to this testimony.

The JustGreen Partnership

Working for Environmental Health and Justice for New York's People and Communities

Coordinated by Clean and Healthy New York
& WE ACT for Environmental Justice
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Alliance @ IBM
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
American Sustainable Business Council
Arbor Hill Environmental Justice Corp.
Association of Comparative and Environmental Toxicology Students
Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester
Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes
Center for Environmental Health
Center for Health, Environment & Justice
Citizens Campaign for the Environment
Citizens' Environmental Coalition
Clean Air Coalition of WNY
Clean and Healthy New York
Clean Production Action
Coalition to End Lead Poisoning
Comm. Workers of America Loc 1701
Community Action Organization – Center for Environmental Justice
Community Health & Environment Coalition of Long Island
Earthjustice
Environmental Justice Action Group of WNY
Faces of Astarte
Garrison Institute
Great Neck Breast Cancer Coalition
Greenpeace USA – NY Chapter
Healthy Schools Network
Huntington Breast Cancer Action Coalition
Institute for Health and the Environment at SUNYA
Learning Disabilities Association of NYS and local chapters:
Central New York
Life & Learning Services of Rochester
New York City
Southern Tier
Western New York
Wildwood Program (Cap. District)
Mira's Movement
Moms Clean Air Force
Moms for a Non-Toxic New York
NARAL Pro Choice New York
Natural Resources Defense Council
NYC Environmental Justice Alliance
NY Lawyers for the Public Interest
NY League of Conservation Voters
NYPiRG
NYS Nurses Association
NYS Sustainable Business Council
NYS United Teachers
Parents Against Lindane
Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes
Prevention is the Cure
Sierra Club
United Steelworkers, District 4
WEACT for Environmental Justice
W. Haywood Burns Environmental Education Center

Bold indicates Steering Committee

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2017-18 Budget Priorities

The JustGreen Partnership, a collaborative of over 50 organizations representing more than a million New Yorkers, supports the following initiatives in the 2017-2018 New York State budget. All of the programs fall within the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), which we urge full funding at \$300 million.

Given the size of the NYS budget, \$300 million is a significant yet modest amount to dedicate to protecting New York's environment. Our budget requests are even more modest, totaling \$14 million. This is 4.6% of the EPF, and .09% of the entire state budget.

1. **Pollution Prevention Institute:** The JustGreen Partnership has been a strong supporter of the P2I since its inception. New York's businesses are taking steps to reduce pollution by addressing underlying sources, which can save companies money, reduce their liability, protect their brand name and lower their regulatory burden. P2I offers assistance to start-up companies to demonstrate the environmental benefits of their innovative ideas, and supports community grants that prevent pollution and promote the innovation of sustainable concepts in localities across the state. By including \$4 million in the 2017-2018 NYS budget, P2I would be able to further expand its reach and impact on communities in NYS.
2. **Interstate Chemicals Clearinghouse:** We urge that the P2I funding include \$100,000 in support for the Interstate Chemicals Clearinghouse (IC2). The IC2 has provided much-needed technical support to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and leverages the knowledge, experience, and data collection of other states, to New York's benefit.
3. **Children's Environmental Health Centers of Excellence:** We support the Centers because of their groundbreaking research that identifies environmental causes of childhood diseases, which has led to better education for families and public policy improvements. The cost of diseases of environmental origin in New York is staggering – Mt. Sinai School of Medicine estimated that even a small cluster of illnesses like asthma, pediatric cancer, and developmental disabilities in New York's children costs the state \$4.35 billion. Just a one percent reduction in these illnesses from a \$2 million dollar investment would save twenty times that amount.
4. **Environmental Justice:** The JustGreen Partnership supports including \$7 million in funding for environmental justice initiatives. Environmental Justice in New York State helps extend green benefits to all communities, especially low-income and communities of color, within the state and promotes further education and research in order to reduce the disproportionate impact of pollution and toxic chemicals in the environment.
5. **Environmental Health:** We support an inclusion of \$1 million into the 2017-18 NYS budget for the funding of initiatives to assess and address environmental health concerns within NYS communities, schools, and environment. Health advisories and education programs for health conditions, such as asthma, have led to an increase in awareness and materials for communities.

