

January 27, 2021

Hon. Liz Krueger, Chair
New York State Senate Finance Committee
416 Capitol, Albany, NY 12247

Hon. Helene E. Weinstein, Chair
New York State Assembly Ways & Means Committee
LOB 923, Albany, NY 12248

Hon. Todd Kaminsky, Chair
New York State Senate Environmental Conservation Committee
LOB 307, Albany, NY 12247

Hon. Steve Englebright, Chair
New York State Assembly Committee on Environmental Conservation
LOB 621, Albany, NY 12248

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Executive Director,
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*Legislative and Political
Director, CWA District 1*

Maritza Silva-Farrell
Executive Director,
ALIGN

Lucia Gomez
Political Director
NYC Central Labor Council

Jonathan Westin
Executive Director,
New York Communities for
Change

**Re: ALIGN's 2021-2022 Executive Budget Proposal Testimony to the
Environmental Conservation Committee**

Dear Senator Krueger, Assemblywoman Weinstein, Senator Kaminsky and
Assemblyman Englebright:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on the New York State
budget. My name is Maritza Silva-Farrell, and I am the Executive Director
at ALIGN: The Alliance for a Greater New York. ALIGN is a longstanding
alliance of community, labor, and environmental justice organizations
dedicated to creating good jobs, vibrant communities, and an accountable
democracy for all New Yorkers. We are also members of the NY Renews
coalition, a multi-sector coalition of over 250 member organizations that
represents thousands of New Yorkers and for decades we have led a
number of initiatives and campaigns, such as the Climate Works for All
Coalition, focused on climate justice.

Our testimony is about two important issues—the Climate and
Community Investment Act and the provision in the Governor's bill that
enables New York City building owners to evade responsibility in
reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Climate and Community Investment Act

In 2019, New York became a national climate leader by passing the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA), which has already had a huge impact on making sure our state and even federal climate policy centers the need to build good green jobs and the needs of environmental justice communities.

However, there is more work to be done. In the past year, we've seen the climate crisis continue unabated while dealing with a devastating global pandemic and recession, which hit frontline Black and brown communities first and worst. Our state needs an economic and climate just transition to a renewable energy economy, and we need new revenue to put people back to work, build out renewable infrastructure, and invest in communities hit hardest by these overlapping crises. Economic recovery in the age of COVID-19 and climate change means that we cannot afford to address these crises in silos.

The Climate and Community Investment Act (CCIA) is the solution to multi-issue recovery we need. The CCIA would put a fee on pollution and raise \$15 billion per year. This money would be used to transition our economy to 100% renewable energy, invest in Black and brown communities most impacted by pollution and climate change, create 150,000 good career jobs, and help people with their utility bills.

The legislature was a champion for the CLCPA — we need you again to stand up for climate, jobs, and justice. More importantly, and thanks to the CLCPA, it is NY law that 40% of any state climate funds be spent specifically in frontline communities, largely BIPOC and low-income communities most impacted by climate change and pollution. The budget approved this year must explicitly reflect the 40% goal and requirement. Climate justice must be front and center in our state's climate policy.

Provision enabling New York City buildings owners to evade climate change responsibility

The Transportation, Economic Development, and Environmental Conservation FY 2021 Article VII bill contains a provision that undermines New York City's Local Law 97, a bold and avant-garde law passed in 2019 that caps emissions from large buildings. The provision would allow

large building owners to purchase offsets from renewable energy sources outside of New York City in order to avoid the leadership and actual work needed to fight climate change. This policy option was already debated and staunchly opposed by numerous stakeholders.

ALIGN, along with labor and community-based organizations that comprise the Climate Works for All Coalition, worked tirelessly to ensure that through Local Law 97, large building owners perform the necessary retrofits and energy system upgrades that actually reduce greenhouse gas emissions, rather than opting out of this work through renewable energy credits and other carbon trading schemes. Given that buildings account for over 70% of the City's carbon footprint, it is unconscionable that the Real Estate Board of New York is buying a loophole to help large building owners avoid responsibility.¹ We oppose the proposed Executive Budget language to override NYC's landmark Local Law 97.

Furthermore, Local Law 97 and the energy efficiency and upgrades it requires can provide thousands of good-paying jobs for construction workers, HVAC technicians, electricians, painters, carpenters, and other building trades professionals. Market analyses conducted soon after the law passed estimated that it could provide a market opportunity of \$20 billion dollars and over 140,000 jobs across the New York City metro area by 2030.² In the midst of a necessary COVID-19 economic recovery and a current unemployment rate of 11.8% in the City, now more than ever, we need government leadership to support activities that can solve the multiple crises we are experiencing. Good climate policy is good labor policy.

Thank you for your time and for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



Sincerely,

Maritza Silva-Farrell
Executive Director

¹ French, Marie J. (2021, January 25). "Cuomo's renewable energy boon to New York City building owners." POLITICO. Retrieved from <https://www.politico.com/states/new-york/city-hall/story/2021/01/25/cuomos-renewable-energy-boon-to-new-york-city-building-owners-1359636>

² Urban Green Council. (2019, June 19). "Retrofit Market Analysis" Retrieved from https://www.urbangreencouncil.org/sites/default/files/urban_green_retrofit_market_analysis.pdf