

January 31, 2024

Subject: Environmental Conservation Budget Hearings

Dear Senator Liz Krueger, Assembly Member Helene Weinstein, and members of the New York State Legislature:

I urge you to include the Climate Superfund Act in the Senate and Assembly one-house budgets.

I write to you as a New Yorker, a mother, a retired public high school teacher, and a member of the climate organization 350Brooklyn. As the climate emergency accelerates, I fear for the future facing my children, my hoped-for grandchildren, and the students I taught. I'm well aware of the damage caused by an overheating atmosphere. A beloved graduate of the high school where I taught lost her life in Superstorm Sandy in 2012, while rising sea levels caused flooding in the homes of many students and staff. A few years ago, Hurricane Ida slammed into New York and I found myself stranded when the subways shut down. In this case, overheated seawater caused a hurricane that looked like it was washing out after hitting the Gulf Coast to pick up fresh steam and wreak havoc in the Northeast. It's clear that everyone, and government at every level, should do everything possible to counter this existential crisis.

It's no mystery that burning fossil fuels is the primary driver of our climate crisis. The Climate Superfund Act would attack the problem by charging fossil fuel companies for their role in causing the problem. Under this proposal, the worst actors – defined as those responsible for the most greenhouse gas emissions -- would pay for the damage New York State has suffered, and will suffer, from extreme weather events arising from the heating up of earth's atmosphere. This bill relies on the same reasoning as the 43-year-old federal Superfund law: those who cause the damage are made to pay for fixing it.

The state Climate Action Council's December 2022 report found that New York would need to spend \$10-15 billion a year for the foreseeable future to build resiliency against extreme weather events and to make the necessary transition to renewable energy. Taxpayers should not have to pay for the damages that the fossil fuel industry has caused (especially in light of all the evidence that the industry knew the consequences of using its products but did everything possible to cover up and refute this information). The Climate Superfund would collect \$3billion a year for 25 years, relieving taxpayers of at least some of the burden of paying for this damage.

Funds collected by the Climate Superfund would create green jobs that can't be outsourced. The money would fund:

- **Repairing** climate-related damages to roads and bridges;
- **Upgrading** critical infrastructure – subways, roads, sewage and water treatment facilities -- to make it more resilient to extreme wind and flooding;
- **Helping** people adapt to climate related heat and storms by installing air conditioning in schools, nursing homes, day care centers and by providing health care to those suffering from climate-related illnesses such as asthma or heat stroke.

I very much appreciate Senator Krueger's role as author of this bill and in championing other legislation designed to protect our climate. I hope the legislature will pass the Climate Superfund Act during this session.

Sincerely,
Mimi Bluestone

315 St. John's Place #4C
Brooklyn NY 11238

917-838-0153