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February 2, 2024

Subject: Environmental Conservation Budget Hearings; need for NY HEAT Act, Climate Change Superfund Act, and a building retrofit readiness fund

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

I am writing to urge you to include the full NY HEAT Act (S2016B/A4592B) and the Climate Change Superfund Act (S2129A/A3351A) in the state budget, along with funding to help accelerate the transition off fossil fuels in buildings.

I was delighted to see that Governor Hochul included some key aspects of the NY HEAT Act in her Executive Budget, but her proposal did not go far enough. We not only need to halt the expansion of the gas delivery system and enable utilities to provide thermal services instead of gas, but we need to ensure that no one pays more than 6% of their household income on utility bills. Currently, utility bills are highly regressive, with low-income customers paying a much higher percent of their income than wealthy customers, while typically using less energy. Without regulatory and budgetary intervention, utility bills will become even more regressive as wealthier customers remove themselves from the gas system and leave the remaining customers to pay for its upkeep. It is now the responsibility of the Senate and Assembly to ensure that the full NY HEAT Act, including its affordability protection, makes it into the final state budget.

I urge you to include funding for a retrofit-readiness program for New York's buildings. Currently, there are many buildings that can't be electrified, or even sufficiently weatherized, until they undergo remediation for environmental hazards. Let's build a future where everyone can breathe clean air, and no family is forced to live with indoor pollutants like lead paint, mold, asbestos, or the fumes from fossil fuel combustion.

Finally, I urge you to pass the Climate Change Superfund Act in the budget as a way to establish an additional funding source for climate adaptation. The Cap and Invest program was a good start, but it is plainly insufficient. The Climate Action Council Final Scoping Plan estimated that New York would need to spend \$10-15 billion each year to both build resiliency in the face of extreme weather and make the transition to renewable energy, but the Cap and Invest program will only generate at most \$3.2 billion of investments per year by 2025 and up to

\$8 billion per year by 2030. The Climate Change Superfund Act makes up part of the difference. Instead of ordinary New Yorkers, the largest multinational oil companies should be the ones to pay to fix the damage they have caused by selling a product that they knew was harmful. Even after the causes of climate change were established without any doubt, and even as climate change accelerates, the largest fossil fuel companies continue to make windfall profits, expand fossil fuel production, and deliberately mislead the public by advertising their token investments into renewables and by exaggerating the viability of carbon capture and storage. We will continue to experience extreme weather disasters until the climate is stabilized, so we badly need to establish a permanent funding mechanism to help us adapt and recover.

Senator Krueger deserves recognition for the work she has done, and continues to do, to advance these important bills. Now I urge the Senate and the Assembly to fulfill the promise of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act by passing a budget that enables every New Yorker to breathe clean air, and that makes the worst climate culprits pay for the damage they have done and continue to do.

Sincerely,
Delia Kulukundis
Volunteer, 350Brooklyn and Renewable Heat Now