



NY Renews Environmental Conservation Budget Testimony

I am honored to testify today on behalf of the NY Renews coalition.

NY Renews is a multi-sector coalition of over 300 member organizations across every part of New York State and the force behind the nation's most progressive climate law, the **Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA)**. A Steering Committee of representatives from environmental justice, community organizing, labor, faith, youth, and climate organizations across New York State governs us. The Steering Committee sets the strategic direction for the NY Renews coalition, and we operate in accordance with the [Jemez Principles](#) of democratic organizing, which are committed to collective decision-making and the leadership of frontline communities.

While many vital issues are being discussed in this year's budget, among the most important is the direction of the state's future efforts around climate change and the billions of dollars we need for climate mitigation, adaptation, transition, and economic development to support communities impacted by climate change.

In business-as-usual scenarios, superstorms like Hurricane Sandy will become increasingly frequent by mid-century, repeatedly inundating the NYC metro area and low-lying regions of Long Island and the Hudson Valley, severely damaging the downstate transportation system and critical infrastructure. An ounce of prevention is truly worth a pound of cure.

The United States leads the world in cumulative greenhouse gas emissions and must now lead the world in reductions. With Congress gridlocked, states must lead—especially New York, an affluent and progressive state with the resources and responsibility to act. But we must fund a just transition to clean renewable energy fast enough to prevent catastrophe. The New York economy is roughly **\$2 trillion annually**. Investing just **1% in clean energy** would pay for itself many times over through avoided costs related to fuel, health care, disaster recovery, and lost productivity.

We urge the Legislature to take action equal to the climate crisis we face. The crisis demands bold action, and the state's 2019 climate law—the CLCPA—mandates it. Current commitments are not consistent with the pace and scale required by the law. We cannot expect private actors to move boldly enough if the state itself is not willing to lead. Public investment and regulatory leadership must drive this transition.

We offer this testimony with urgency and hope. New York has long been a leader in environmental protection and climate policy. But leadership is not a legacy we inherit—it is a responsibility we must actively uphold. The choices before you in this legislative session will determine whether New York meets the scale of the

climate crisis or falls short of its own promises. We are here to urge you to take bold, accountable, and forward-looking action in five key areas.

The Impacts of Climate Change Are Increasingly Severe and Happening Across New York State

Climate change is no longer a distant or abstract threat in New York; its impacts are already widespread, intensifying, and deeply disruptive to public health, infrastructure, ecosystems, and the economy. Rising sea levels pose growing risks to coastal communities and critical infrastructure, including subways, airports, wastewater systems, and power plants. Increased flooding and saltwater intrusion are not only damaging physical assets but also compromising drinking water quality and long-term land usability, creating costly and persistent challenges for urban and coastal regions alike.

Heatwaves and extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and more severe, generating serious public health and energy system consequences. Extreme heat now constitutes one of the deadliest climate-related hazards in the state, with rising rates of heat exhaustion, heat stroke, and cardiovascular stress—particularly among older adults, children, outdoor workers, and individuals with pre-existing conditions. At the same time, increased demand for air conditioning during prolonged heat events is placing unprecedented strain on the electric grid, leading to routine power outages across many regions, as documented by the New York Independent System Operator (NYISO). These outages further exacerbate health risks by disrupting cooling, medical equipment, and emergency services.

Shifts in precipitation patterns are also producing destabilizing effects. New York is experiencing both more frequent flash flooding and longer periods of drought, reflecting growing climate variability. These conditions threaten public safety, water security, and agricultural productivity, while also undermining tourism and recreation industries that depend on predictable seasonal weather. Winter sports face shorter and less reliable snow seasons, while summer tourism increasingly confronts safety risks related to extreme heat, wildfire smoke, and flooding.

Our ecosystems systems are undergoing significant disruption as well. Warmer temperatures are enabling invasive species to expand into new habitats, displacing native wildlife and altering ecosystem functions. At the same time, expanded tick and mosquito ranges are increasing exposure to vector-borne diseases such as Lyme disease and West Nile virus, posing additional public health risks. Air quality is also deteriorating, as higher temperatures intensify the formation of ground-level ozone and fine particulate matter. Poor air quality has been linked to rising asthma rates and respiratory hospitalizations, with approximately 10% of New York children and nearly 10% of adults currently affected—resulting in significant educational and economic losses through school absences and missed workdays.

The economic consequences of these impacts are substantial and escalating. Climate-related disruptions are affecting tourism, agriculture, and labor productivity, while infrastructure adaptation and disaster recovery require massive public investment. Farmers face declining yields and income volatility due to unpredictable weather, and communities across the state are grappling with increased costs associated with flood protection, heat mitigation, and emergency response. Climate stress is also contributing to migration pressures, as extreme conditions and economic instability drive population shifts that strain housing, social services, and community cohesion.

Collectively, these trends demonstrate that climate change in New York is already generating systemic risks that cut across environmental, social, and economic domains. The scale and severity of these impacts underscore the urgent need for comprehensive, proactive climate policy centered on mitigation, adaptation, and equity.

The 2026-2027 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.

New York's Climate Law Must be Enforced and Properly Funded

In 2019, this Legislature fought against fossil fuel companies, entrenched business interests, and even pushed the executive branch to pass the strongest climate legislation in the country: the CLCPA. In doing so, the Legislature won meaningful victories for our communities and for climate action. Unfortunately, one of the reasons I am here today is to testify about a growing threat to those hard-won victories.

The Governor's budget language emphasizes energy affordability, a vital goal in this economic climate. However, as we proceed with developing our energy future, it is equally vital that we do not allow the mandates and ambition of the CLCPA to be weakened in the name of administrative convenience. The CLCPA incorporates strong, science-based standards and definitions, including rigorous accounting for methane emissions and clear processes for identifying Disadvantaged Communities. Equally important, these funds must support workforce development and job training programs that prepare New Yorkers for careers in clean energy, construction, and sustainable

infrastructure. Climate investment should be a vehicle for economic justice as well as environmental protection. By investing in community-based climate solutions, particularly in disadvantaged areas, New York can reduce emissions while also addressing long-standing inequities in health, housing, and employment. These safeguards are not technical details—they are essential protections for public health and environmental justice.

Loosening these standards would imperil the lives of New Yorkers for the sake of short-term political or bureaucratic ease. If we want to meaningfully address the climate crisis and health-damaging pollution in New York State, we must aggressively protect the integrity of the CLCPA and ensure it is properly funded and enforced.

We Still Don't Have Cap and Invest Regulations

Last year, Governor Hochul touted that we would see cap and invest regulations - **we still don't have them**. We have advocated for the careful creation of cap and invest regulation, as a dedicated revenue from these investments goes to already overburdened communities that are being affected by polluters and negatively interacting with other programs, as mandated by the Climate Law. It is clearly written in the CLCPA and the final scoping around legislative spending that good policy design and strong language are necessary, not to get caught in traps or pitfalls that could compromise equitable spending and rigorous enforcement for key safeguards. A firm, declining cap on pollution is essential to ensure that emissions actually go down in line with our CLCPA targets.

The science is unequivocal: to avert the worst impacts of climate change, we must rapidly and steadily reduce greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors of our economy. We cannot achieve this through voluntary measures alone or through fragmented policies that lack accountability. By setting a clear limit on emissions while allowing for market flexibility, it incentivizes innovation, efficiency, and the transition to clean energy. At the same time, the revenues generated from this program can — and must — be reinvested in communities that have been most harmed by pollution, including low-income neighborhoods, communities of color, and rural areas facing economic transition.

A well-designed Cap-and-Invest system can reduce air pollution, improve public health outcomes, create thousands of good-paying green jobs, and provide long-term regulatory certainty for businesses planning their clean energy investments. We urge the legislature to pass a robust Cap-and-Invest program that prioritizes transparency, strong enforcement, and meaningful community benefits, rather than allowing major polluters to continue externalizing their environmental and public health costs onto New Yorkers.

Fully Implement the Sustainable Futures Fund — Not Reappropriate It

The Sustainable Futures Fund must be fully implemented as originally intended, rather than treated as a flexible “reappropriation” mechanism or quietly redirected to unrelated budgetary priorities. The fund was

established to serve as a core instrument for ensuring that New York’s climate transition is not only technically effective in reducing emissions, but also socially just, community-driven, and institutionally accountable to populations that have historically borne the greatest environmental and economic burdens. Its purpose is to provide dedicated, long-term investment in frontline and environmental justice communities, supporting locally defined projects that address systemic inequities in energy access, public health, housing quality, and climate resilience.

Reappropriating or diluting these funds undermines both public trust and the integrity of the state’s climate governance framework. Such actions weaken the very financial mechanisms designed to operationalize environmental justice principles and risk transforming legally mandated equity commitments into symbolic gestures rather than enforceable policy obligations. When funds explicitly designated for marginalized communities are diverted, it signals that equity is treated as a discretionary add-on rather than a foundational pillar of climate policy. New Yorkers—particularly those in environmental justice communities—deserve not only legislative recognition, but material follow-through. The full and transparent implementation of the Sustainable Futures Fund is therefore essential for maintaining democratic accountability, honoring community participation, and ensuring that the benefits of climate action are distributed fairly and meaningfully across the state.

We urge the Legislature and Governor Hocu to ensure that the Sustainable Futures Fund is fully funded with at least **\$3 billion in general revenue in the 2026-2027 Budget** transparently administered, and directed toward projects that deliver measurable climate, health, and economic benefits. This includes investments in community-led resilience projects, clean energy access for low-income households, and local initiatives that build long-term sustainability rather than short-term fixes. New York has an opportunity to set a national standard for equitable climate financing. This will account for the money we could have raised over the last year if cap and invest were already in place—as it should be, both morally and legally.

EMPOWER+ is Necessary for Reduced Emissions

EMPOWER+ is not merely a beneficial program but a necessary component of an equitable and effective climate transition in New York State. The building sector remains one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for a substantial share of energy consumption and fossil fuel use, particularly through inefficient heating, cooling, and appliance systems. Yet low-income households, renters, and marginalized communities face persistent structural barriers to accessing energy efficiency upgrades, including high upfront costs, split incentives between landlords and tenants, and limited access to financing or technical assistance. EMPOWER+ plays a critical role in addressing these inequities by providing targeted investments in weatherization, building electrification, and energy efficiency improvements that would otherwise remain inaccessible to those most affected by energy poverty.

Beyond its climate and economic benefits, EMPOWER+ functions as a public health intervention with significant implications for environmental justice. Substandard housing conditions—such as inadequate

insulation, outdated combustion-based heating systems, and inefficient or unsafe appliances—are strongly associated with elevated rates of respiratory illness, cardiovascular disease, heat stress, and exposure to indoor air pollutants. These risks are disproportionately concentrated in low-income and frontline communities, exacerbating existing health disparities. By supporting comprehensive home energy upgrades, EMPOWER+ improves indoor air quality, enhances thermal comfort, and reduces vulnerability to extreme weather events, thereby advancing both public health and climate resilience. Sustained and expanded investment in EMPOWER+ is therefore essential not only for achieving emissions reductions, but for ensuring that the benefits of New York’s climate policies are distributed equitably and that no community is left behind in the transition to a clean energy future.

Data Centers Must Be Carefully Regulated

We urge caution, transparency, and strong regulatory oversight regarding the rapid expansion of data centers in New York. While digital infrastructure plays an important role in our modern economy, unchecked data center growth poses serious risks to our climate commitments and our electric grid.

Environmental Impacts and Zoning

Data centers are extraordinarily energy-intensive facilities that can dramatically increase local and statewide electricity demand. Without strict safeguards, their proliferation could force New York to rely more heavily on fossil fuels, strain our grid, stress our water systems, and undermine progress toward a 100% clean energy system, particularly during peak demand periods. This intensified demand places significant strain on transmission and distribution infrastructure, increases the likelihood of grid congestion and reliability challenges, and diverts clean energy resources away from residential and essential public uses. In addition to energy burdens, data centers exert substantial pressure on local water systems, as many facilities depend on large volumes of water for cooling, contributing to water scarcity, thermal pollution, and ecosystem degradation—especially in regions already vulnerable to drought or climate variability. Collectively, these impacts threaten to undermine progress toward New York’s legally mandated 100% clean energy targets under the CLCPA, eroding the state’s climate leadership by embedding carbon-intensive and resource-extractive infrastructure into the foundation of its digital economy.

Governor Hochul’s State of the State embraces the siting of these centers through reformed regulation, such as the attempt to reform the *State Environmental Quality Review Act*. However, this has the high potential for siting to disproportionately affect nearby communities, which may experience increased pollution, noise, and infrastructure burdens without receiving commensurate benefits. If state legislation were to supersede or weaken planning and zoning, it would undermine the ability of counties and municipalities to anticipate, evaluate, and respond to the unique impacts of data centers.

A 2025 study by the Global Commercial Real Estate Service found that 95% of major investors globally are projected to invest in data centers; 41% of those in the study planned to allocate \$500 million or more in equity to the data center sector in 2025. New York must not rush into deals or approvals that prioritize corporate interests over public and environmental well-being. These concerns are starkly reflected by the 2.2 million square foot, 500 megawatt data center proposed at the Western NY Science and Technology Advanced Manufacturing Park (STAMP) on the border of the Tonawanda Seneca Nation's Territory by STREAM US Data Centers and their corporate parent, Apollo Global Management, which the Nation and NY Renews opposes. Local and Nation governments must retain the ability to manage land use in ways that reflect the values and priorities of their communities.

Communities should not feel the drain of data centers on their natural and generated resources. Any expansion of data centers must be fully aligned with and drive forward New York's climate laws and clean energy capacity, rather than backtrack on the state's hard-fought climate policies.

Community Consent and Accountability in Data Center Development

There has been widespread opposition to the creation and expansion of data centers at both the state and national levels. Community and stakeholder input has been marginalized in decision-making processes, despite the fact that local residents are the primary populations subjected to the environmental, economic, and infrastructural impacts of these facilities. This disconnect has become **increasingly visible**. According to Data Center Watch, at least 53 community groups across 17 states have mobilized against proposed projects, and approximately \$98 billion in data center developments were canceled between March and June 2025 alone. In states such as New Jersey and Virginia, data centers have emerged as central issues in recent gubernatorial and legislative campaigns, where voters have expressed concern over rising electricity rates coinciding with unprecedented growth in energy-intensive digital infrastructure.

This growing conflict underscores the absence of a sustainable middle ground and highlights the urgent need for a shift in governance practices. Communities are demanding greater transparency, meaningful consultation, and enforceable oversight in decisions that fundamentally reshape local landscapes and resource systems. These demands are likely to intensify in the absence of comprehensive public data on the full impacts of data centers. While technology firms frequently claim that their facilities are designed to be adaptable to future innovations, they do not present clear contingency plans addressing facility obsolescence, infrastructure abandonment, or long-term environmental liabilities.

The legislature must ensure communities have more agency and say in conversations involving data centers in their regions and have the ability to ask about the plans for stranded and deserted

buildings, including how they can be repurposed or better integrated into community settings at the onset. Without meaningful community engagement and appropriate safeguards to protect local resources, proposed data centers are just liabilities resulting in sustained community opposition and economic consequences.

The legislature must ensure that communities possess genuine agency in siting and development processes, including **enforceable rights to require binding commitments and to exercise formal approval or veto authority over proposed data center developments**. Without institutionalized mechanisms for public participation and accountability, data centers will become liabilities that impose long-term social and environmental costs, reinforcing public opposition and undermining the legitimacy of digital infrastructure development.

The state needs to be careful - data centers have demonstrated the ability to compromise public interest.

We need to require rigorous environmental impact assessments for all new data center proposals, mandate that these facilities provide and run on verified renewable energy, and limit their placement in already overburdened communities. To address everyone's needs, state and local leaders, business owners, employees, and residents should participate in planning and implementation together with technology companies.

Nuclear is NOT New York's Energy Solution

The use of nuclear energy holds a multitude of structural and systemic problems that undermine its viability as a sustainable climate solution. Nuclear energy's high capital costs, unresolved waste legacy, environmental harms, and inequitable social impacts render it a short-sighted and risky option when compared to renewable alternatives. Safety risks remain a central concern, as both catastrophic failures and routine operations demonstrate the potential for long-term contamination of land, water, and human communities. Even under normal conditions, nuclear reactors emit radioactive effluents, while uranium extraction has historically imposed disproportionate health and environmental burdens on Indigenous communities through radiation exposure, ecosystem destruction, and violations of sovereignty.

The Cost and Consequence of Nuclear Power

Economically, nuclear power is among the most expensive forms of electricity, requiring massive subsidies and bailouts to keep aging reactors online while cheaper renewables go underfunded. So beyond these well-documented harms, nuclear energy actively diverts financial and political resources away from proven renewable solutions. In New York, multibillion-dollar subsidies continue to keep aging upstate reactors operational—subsidies recently extended by the Public Service Commission—despite the fact that wind, solar, and energy storage are now the cheapest sources of electricity globally.

These are comparable patterns that are evident elsewhere: the construction of just two reactors in Georgia led to nearly a 25% increase in consumer electricity rates, while South Carolina residents continue to pay approximately 10% of their utility bills for canceled reactors that consumed over \$9 billion in public investment. New York itself has a long history of failed nuclear development, with more canceled reactor projects than any other state, including the fully constructed Shoreham facility, whose costs are still borne by Long Island ratepayers decades later. This pattern **reveals a direct opportunity cost**: each dollar allocated to nuclear expansion represents a dollar not invested in scalable, rapidly deployable renewable infrastructure. Framing nuclear development as a climate solution thus constitutes a strategic distraction, particularly in light of proposals to pursue a 5GW nuclear target while underinvesting in far more impactful alternatives, such as expanding the New York Power Authority's renewable buildout to at least 15GW. Empirically and economically, increased reliance on nuclear energy systematically delays the energy transition by crowding out the very technologies—wind, solar, and storage—that are essential for achieving decarbonization at the necessary speed and scale

Continuing investment in nuclear energy reflects not market efficiency but structural dependence on state intervention and risk socialization. The nuclear sector is characterized by chronic cost overruns, extended construction timelines, and persistent reliance on public financing mechanisms, including loan guarantees, liability caps, and decommissioning subsidies. These financial protections effectively transfer economic risk from private operators to taxpayers, while alternative energy systems—particularly solar and wind—demonstrate rapidly declining costs, shorter deployment cycles, and greater resilience to systemic shocks. When evaluated through a cost-benefit framework that incorporates not only direct energy output but also long-term waste management, disaster vulnerability, and social externalities, nuclear power emerges as a comparatively inefficient and inequitable allocation of public resources in the context of escalating climate instability.

Longterm Nuclear Waste Risk

The problems caused by radioactive waste remain fundamentally unresolved, as spent nuclear fuel is predominantly stored on-site in temporary dry cask systems designed to last approximately a century, while the radioactive materials they contain remain hazardous for thousands to hundreds of thousands of years. This temporal mismatch between containment infrastructure and radiological persistence represents a profound failure of long-term governance, effectively transferring unmanaged risks to future generations without their consent. More critically, existing regulatory frameworks have not demonstrated the institutional capacity to manage, monitor, or secure current waste inventories in a manner that ensures meaningful protection of public health or environmental integrity. In this context, the continued production of additional radioactive waste constitutes not

merely a technical challenge but an ethical and policy failure and is fundamentally irresponsible and incompatible with principles of sustainable governance.

In addition to long-term environmental uncertainties, nuclear facilities present measurable public health risks for surrounding populations. A growing body of epidemiological research has identified statistically significant increases in cancer incidence, congenital anomalies, and developmental impairments among communities residing in proximity to nuclear power plants and radioactive waste storage sites. These risks are particularly acute for children and infants, whose physiological vulnerability to ionizing radiation is heightened due to rapid cellular division, longer lifetime exposure windows, and greater sensitivity of developing organs. Even chronic exposure to low-dose radiation—often considered “within regulatory limits”—has been associated with cumulative biological effects, challenging the assumption that routine operations pose negligible harm.

This reality exposes a structural inconsistency in contemporary public policy frameworks. Governments frequently justify continued nuclear investment on economic or energy-security grounds while simultaneously committing substantial resources to early childhood development, healthcare, and educational equity. Such dual commitments are inherently contradictory when the same policy regime facilitates environmental conditions that undermine people’s fundamental right to health. Our governance model needs to genuinely prioritize intergenerational welfare and must therefore integrate precautionary principles into energy planning, recognizing that social investments lose moral and practical legitimacy if they coexist with systemic practices that knowingly generate long-term public health risks for the most vulnerable members of society.

Yet despite all of these very substantial issues, nuclear is being praised as a “sustainable” and “zero emissions” energy source, **when it is not**. CLCPA only cites nuclear as an option that can qualify toward the 2040 target of 100% zero-emissions electricity supply; it **does not mean** it should be pursued as a primary energy source to further develop. For decades, the same mistakes around nuclear have been repeated in the energy sector, particularly when it comes to the handling of nuclear reactors. The prioritization of aging and new nuclear infrastructure over actual zero-emission energy sources is highly concerning and begs the question of why this is being considered over proven, non-contentious solutions.

Indigenous Sovereignty Is Fundamental to Climate Justice

Indigenous communities in New York State are on the frontline of direct impacts from climate change, have unique historical and contemporary relationships to the land, and understand best practices for land care. They have also been at the forefront of climate change organizing, from the fight to ban fracking, to movements for fossil fuel divestment, to efforts exposing nuclear power as a false solution, to solidarity with Standing Rock. Their voices are critical to ensuring that we not only meet the mandates of New York’s Climate Law but do so by investing in Indigenous-led solutions.

We want to uplift the following priorities of our Nation partners, which reflect our shared positions on New York State's economic development policy, data center development, and the role of nuclear power in our energy system.

Tonawanda Seneca Nation

The 1794 Treaty of Canandaigua is one of the most important treaties to the Haudenosaunee and remains the law of the land to this day. The treaty upholds Haudenosaunee sovereignty by establishing “a firm and permanent friendship” between the Haudenosaunee and the United States, and enshrines the right of the Haudenosaunee to the “free use and enjoyment” of their lands.

Construction of the STAMP mega-industrial site, which lies next to and upstream from the Tonawanda Seneca Nation's pristine Big Woods and waterways, including Tonawanda Creek, violates this historic agreement and is being carried out without proper consultation with the Nation's Council of Chiefs. The Nation demands that impacts on its Territory and its treaty rights be fully and meaningfully considered prior to any further allocation of state subsidies or granting of permits and approvals to the Genesee Economic Development Center (GCEDC) or STAMP tenants.

Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC) block grant funding programs must not be allocated to STAMP, GCEDC, or tenants at STAMP. These block grant programs are characterized by opacity and lack of accountability. We are concerned that Governor Hochul leverages them as a slush fund to direct monies to failing, harmful projects such as WNY STAMP.

No monies from Focused Attraction of Shovel-Ready Tracts New York (FAST-NY) program or from its successor program, the Promote Opportunity with Electric Readiness for Underdeveloped Properties (POWERUP), should be allocated to GCEDC, STAMP, or tenants at STAMP. We call for full transparency and accountability in allocations made under the auspices of ESDC block grant programs such as FAST NY and POWERUP. **The Legislature should explore the possibility of line-timing Executive funding proposals for ESDC.**

Similar lack of transparency exists over the New York Power Authority's low-cost hydropower allocations, which have been used to support tenants at STAMP. We call on the Legislature to take steps to prohibit the allocation of low-cost Niagara River hydropower to tenants at STAMP. And we **call on the Legislature to take steps to prohibit the allocation of low-cost Niagara River hydropower to data centers and the AI industry**, especially as a massive data center proposal threatens to move forward at STAMP despite opposition from the Nation and local residents.

Onondaga Nation, Tuscarora Nation, and the Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force (HETF)

Through the State Energy Plan public comment process, the Onondaga and Tuscarora Nations, as well as HETF, submitted comments documenting their opposition to the existing nuclear fleet in New York State and the proposals for new nuclear development directed by Governor Hochul.

In addition to our concerns raised previously on the impacts of nuclear, NY Renews also **affirms the position of the Nations and HETF in opposing nuclear** due to the adverse impacts to Indigenous communities across the nuclear fuel supply chain and to the Nations in New York State, from thermal energy pollution undermining subsistence hunting, to contamination from the West Valley Nuclear site, to the transportation of nuclear waste through Onondaga Nation land in violation of treaty agreements between the US and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.

Proven Solutions for Achieving a Zero-Emissions Future

We cannot allow the CLCPA to become a vehicle for incomplete, misguided, or politically convenient answers to the fundamental question of how New York will achieve zero emissions, particularly given the rapidly closing window for effective climate action. Failure to align with demonstrated scientific, economic, and equity-based commitments risks transforming landmark climate legislation into symbolic policy rather than a meaningful tool for systemic transformation. The credibility of the state's climate framework depends not only on the targets it establishes, but on the integrity and ambition of the strategies used to reach them.

Renewable energy technologies—particularly solar, wind, and battery storage—already demonstrate their capacity to drive inclusive economic growth, workforce development, and infrastructure resilience.

Solar

Solar energy has emerged as the most successful and scalable clean energy resource in New York State, particularly through distributed generation. While the state has developed only approximately 1 gigawatt (GW) of utility-scale solar over its entire history, distributed solar capacity has reached more than 7.2 GW and continues to grow rapidly, now accounting for roughly 93 percent of all operational solar in the state. Notably, New York's distributed solar sector achieved its Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) mandate of 6 GW by 2025 a full year ahead of schedule and under budget, reaching this milestone in October 2024 and generating over \$400 million in surplus funds through the New York Sun program. Solar energy represents one of the most effective tools for reducing energy costs and advancing climate resilience. Expanding distributed solar to 20 GW by 2035 is projected to generate approximately \$1 billion in wholesale energy savings for New York households and businesses, with benefits distributed across both

upstate and downstate regions. For participating customers, solar and distributed storage directly lower utility bills, while broader deployment helps stabilize rates by displacing aging, expensive fossil fuel power plants that currently drive up system costs. When paired with battery storage - which enhances grid flexibility, reduce curtailment of renewable resources, and decrease reliance on fossil fuel “peaker” plants that are often the most polluting and expensive sources of electricity - distributed solar also enhances community-level resilience by providing localized, reliable power during extreme weather events and grid.

Solar energy is already on track to meet the state’s 10 GW target, has attracted more than \$15 billion in private investment, and supports nearly 19,000 jobs, demonstrating that distributed solar is not only the fastest and easiest clean energy source to deploy, but also a major driver of economic development and workforce growth.

Wind

Wind energy represents one of the most powerful and underutilized opportunities for large-scale decarbonization in New York State. Both onshore and offshore wind resources offer immense potential to deliver reliable, zero-emissions electricity at scale, particularly as the state seeks to electrify buildings, transportation, and industry. Offshore wind, in particular, provides a uniquely strong and consistent resource along New York’s Atlantic coast, capable of generating substantial power during peak demand periods. Investment in wind energy supports long-term price stability by insulating ratepayers from volatile fossil fuel markets, while simultaneously creating high-quality jobs across manufacturing, construction, port infrastructure, and operations. As a domestic and inexhaustible energy source, wind strengthens energy security, reduces air pollution, and plays a critical role in achieving the CLCPA’s emissions targets. When integrated with transmission upgrades and energy storage, wind energy forms a central pillar of a resilient, affordable, and climate-aligned electric grid.

The examples provided here are resources that offer scalable, cost-effective, and rapidly deployable solutions that reduce dependence on volatile fossil fuel markets while strengthening local and regional energy independence. Unlike centralized and capital-intensive energy systems, renewable technologies distribute economic benefits across communities through localized investment, workforce development, and long-term job creation, while simultaneously reducing exposure to global supply chain disruptions and geopolitical instability. In contrast, legacy energy systems rely heavily on financial protections that socialize risk by transferring economic liability from private operators to taxpayers, whereas renewable energy systems exhibit rapidly declining costs, shorter deployment timelines, and greater resilience to systemic shocks, making them a more fiscally responsible and economically durable foundation for the clean energy transition.

Prioritizing these proven solutions is therefore not merely a technological preference, but a policy imperative if the CLCPA is to deliver on its promise of a just, durable, and democratic clean energy transition.

New York already possesses a strong and comprehensive set of policy tools and legislative opportunities capable of advancing a just and effective clean energy transition, including established programs such as the Sustainable Futures Fund and EMPOWER+, active legislative proposals like the GAP Fund, and restore and establish/expand funding for critical development opportunities such as the establishment of Public Thermal Energy Networks. Together, these policies provide the institutional framework and financial mechanisms needed to accelerate decarbonization while simultaneously addressing energy affordability, public health, and environmental justice across the state.

The legislature now faces a clear choice: to leverage these tools to lead a just and effective clean energy transition, or to remain tethered to fossil fuel dependence and risk undermining its climate commitments. Clinging to the status quo would forfeit New York’s leadership, impose avoidable financial and environmental burdens on frontline communities, and increase vulnerability to escalating natural disasters—while also exposing the public to additional man-made risks embedded in false or inadequate “solutions.” The direction taken will determine whether climate policy delivers meaningful protection and opportunity, or merely preserves systems that perpetuate instability and inequity.

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

- **Implement Cap-and-Invest Immediately**
 - Establish a firm, declining cap on greenhouse gas emissions in line with CLCPA targets.
 - Ensure strong enforcement, transparency, and accountability.
 - Direct revenues to frontline and overburdened communities as required by law.
- **Fully Fund and Protect the Sustainable Futures Fund**
 - Allocate at least \$3 billion in general revenue in the 2026–2027 Budget.
 - Prohibit reappropriation or diversion of funds.
 - Guarantee investments flow to environmental justice and frontline communities.
 - Maintain transparent administration and measurable outcomes.
- **Expand and Sustain EMPOWER+**
 - Increase funding for building electrification and energy efficiency.
 - Prioritize low-income households, renters, and marginalized communities.
 - Use EMPOWER+ to reduce emissions, lower energy bills, and improve public health.
 - Treat housing upgrades as both climate infrastructure and health policy.
- **Regulate Data Centers to Protect Public Resources**
 - Require rigorous environmental impact assessments for all new facilities.
 - Mandate verified renewable energy sourcing.
 - Limit siting in overburdened communities.
 - Preserve local zoning authority and require community consent.

- Ensure data centers align with — not undermine — CLCPA goals.
- **Reject Nuclear as a Primary Energy Strategy**
 - End new subsidies and expansion of nuclear power.
 - Address unresolved waste risks, health harms, and economic failures.
 - Prevent nuclear from crowding out in proven renewables such as solar and wind.
 - Redirect investment to renewables thereby lowering costs, creating jobs, and building resilience.
- **Acknowledge and Center Indigenous Sovereignty in the Budget**
 - Require meaningful consultation and honor the expressed opposition of Indigenous Nations to projects that infringe upon their sovereignty and land rights.
 - End energy and infrastructure development that violates sovereignty.
- **Make equity, affordability, and community benefits non-negotiable.**

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 effective legislative and budgetary action can our elected leaders protect their constituents, and with them the entire world.

Best Regards,

Avrielle Miller

NY Renews Policy Director;

On behalf of the NY Renews Steering Committee and Membership

Full list of members (the following pages)

Appendices: Selected References

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

Recent Research Reports by Member organizations

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](#)

Health Impacts

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Data Centers and Community Impacts

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- Kimball, Spencer. "Skyrocketing Electricity Prices Fuel Political Backlash Against Tech Sector's AI Data Centers." [CNBC](#), November 12, 2025.
- Shan, Lee Ying. "Data Are a Gold Rush for Global Real Estate — But Can Funding Keep Up?" [CNBC](#), October 1, 2025.



NY Renews is a statewide coalition of 370+ 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 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
ALIGN - NY Alliance for A Greater	Build A Better Planet
NY	Business Forward
Alive Structures	C4 - Christians Concerned About
All Our Energy	Climate Change
All Souls NYC 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

New York Working Families

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

**Northeastern Organic Farmers
Association - New York**

Northern Power & Light, Inc

Northwest Bronx Community and
Clergy Coalition

Northwest Bronx Indivisible

NW Bronx Indivisible

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
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,

Th!rd Act New York

Tishman Environment and Design
Center
Tompkins County Climate Protection
Initiative
Town of Kirkland Democratic
Committee
Transition Town Port Washington

TREEage

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
Winter Brother
Zero Hour
Zero Hour NYC