

The Honorable Kathy Hochul  
Governor of New York State  
NYS State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

October 16, 2023

Dear Governor Hochul,

We the undersigned 219 organizations, representing tens of thousands of New Yorkers, thank you for your leadership in committing to 2 million climate-friendly homes by 2030, working with the legislature to pass the first-in-the-nation zero emissions new buildings law and the Utility Thermal Energy Network and Jobs Act, and creating funding programs to decarbonize the building sector.

Our organizations are, however, deeply concerned about the rising cost of energy driven by irresponsible fossil fuel investments, and we call on you to lead New York toward a more affordable energy future. Gas utilities are increasing their profits by saddling New Yorkers with the costs of extending the lifespan of antiquated pipeline infrastructure and dangerous technology, all while making New York more expensive and polluted. As a result, 1.2 million households and 127,000 small businesses are behind on their energy bills. After suffering the hottest summer on record globally, millions of New Yorkers will soon face freezing temperatures without adequate insulation or affordable energy. We need your leadership to implement New York's nation-leading Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA), protect New Yorkers from unnecessary energy costs, and ensure safe, comfortable homes year-round.

We urge you to ensure your upcoming State of the State and Executive Budget accomplish the following priorities:

- **Put money back in New Yorkers' pockets by ending wasteful spending of customer funds used to subsidize new fracked gas hookups by finally eliminating the '100-foot rule'**
- **Improve access to cost-saving energy efficiency measures and heat pumps by directing your agencies to create a retrofit readiness fund to fully achieve your Climate Friendly Homes commitment**
- **Enable utilities to opt for cleaner, more cost-effective options rather than unnecessary gas pipelines by amending the obligation to serve gas so that utilities can pursue neighborhood-scale building decarbonization projects**
- **Make energy bills affordable and fair for low and middle-income New Yorkers by ensuring no residential customer pays more than 6% of their income for energy.**
- **Hold gas utilities accountable for reducing climate and air pollution by directing your agencies to set and enforce CLCPA-compliant building sector emission limits.**

While the cost of living has been rising across the economy, recent rate hikes approved for utilities push energy bills up faster than the rate of inflation. The cost of gas utility pipeline expansion and maintenance is a major driver of these gas rate hikes. These costs continue to burden us at a time when we know we need to rapidly reduce fossil fuel use to meet our climate goals. Without your intervention, this problem will worsen because current laws, energy policy, and incentives favor utility investments in unnecessary infrastructure over more cost-effective programs, energy sources, and technologies. Thankfully, the Final Scoping Plan approved by your Climate Action Council provides a roadmap to the changes and investments that will set New York on the responsible path to lower costs for both individual energy bills and the system as a whole.

Our Building Electrification and Equity Platform for 2024, many provisions of which are included in the NY HEAT Act, provides the pathway for necessary climate action that creates more affordable energy bills, cleaner air, and more comfortable, livable homes for New Yorkers:

**1. Put money back in New Yorkers' pockets by ending wasteful spending of customer funds to subsidize new fracked gas hookups.** Outdated Public Service Law requires utilities to use our money to subsidize the cost of new gas hookups within one hundred feet of an existing gas line (the '100 foot rule'). This policy costs New Yorkers hundreds of millions of dollars per year and is not aligned with our climate mandates. For example, the recently filed rate request from National Grid calculates the cost of subsidizing new customer connections and reinforcing the system to serve those new customers at \$210 million for 2024. You can free us from these unnecessary costs by ending the 100-foot rule. This statute change is called for the Final Scoping Plan on page 357.

**2. Fund retrofit readiness to improve access to cost-saving energy efficiency and heat pump installations.** We commend your commitment to 2 million climate-friendly homes by 2030, including 1 million electrification-ready homes, 800,000 of which would be for low-income households. While many programs are available to help weatherize and electrify homes, New York's most vulnerable households are locked out of these cost-saving measures. They are being forced to battle extreme heat and cold, plus high energy bills because their homes are not "retrofit-ready." They need pre-retrofit investments (i.e., structural upgrades, electrical upgrades, and lead, mold, and asbestos remediation) to address deferred maintenance and health hazards that block weatherization and electrification projects from moving forward. The Final Scoping Plan, page 199, calls for a "Retrofit and Electrification Readiness Fund for LMI households, affordable housing, rent-regulated housing, public housing, and residential buildings in Disadvantaged Communities." We are counting on you to identify the funds for these necessary improvements and to direct your agencies to incorporate these measures into their weatherization and electrification programs.

**3. Enable utilities to opt for cleaner, more cost-effective options rather than unnecessary gas pipelines.** Outdated Public Service Law saddles New Yorkers with wasteful spending on the antiquated gas system rather than investing in building improvements and the clean heating and cooling technologies called for in the Final Scoping Climate Plan, including heat pumps and thermal energy networks. We urge you to amend the obligation to serve gas so that utilities can pursue the union-friendly neighborhood-scale building decarbonization projects called for on page 205 of the Final Scoping Plan, which will improve health, safety, and comfort.

**4. Ensure no residential customers pay more than 6% of their income for energy by making rates more fair.** Your administration has taken important steps to improve energy affordability by providing utility debt relief, expanding the utility energy affordability program, and piloting an energy affordability guarantee for customers who electrify through NYSERDA's Empower+ program. Nevertheless, too many households still struggle to afford their bills because utility rates are rising so dramatically. The policies described above, along with important changes in your Public Service Commission's energy efficiency programs through the New Efficiency New York proceeding, will help reduce system-wide energy costs. More relief is needed, however, to protect the lowest-income New Yorkers, who pay an average of 10% of their income on energy (as compared to higher-income households who typically don't pay more than 2% of their income on energy). By guaranteeing residential customers pay no more than 6% of their income on energy, you can save the average low-income household \$75 per month.

**5. Hold utilities accountable to New York's nation-leading climate law.** New York's gas utilities, which represent a significant opportunity to reduce building sector emissions, are continuing to pump money into their gas pipeline networks – including billions of dollars of customer money on expanding and extending the life of their gas infrastructure – without viable plans to reduce fossil fuel usage and corresponding emissions to levels commensurate with CLCPA mandates. The gas utilities need clear direction to rein in fossil fuel spending and guide their long-term planning efforts. We therefore call on you to direct the Department of Environmental Conservation to set sector-specific GHG emission limits for the buildings sector, and to direct the Public Service Commission to set declining emission limits, in line with the CLCPA, for each gas utility and to enforce these limits through the gas planning process.

Prior commitments and actions have set you and your administration up for success in achieving these goals. The Final Scoping Plan describes a transition to well-insulated homes and buildings, powered by clean energy, that will result in lower bills and cleaner air that drives a healthier, more prosperous New York for all. But profit-seeking investments by gas utilities stand in the way of that transition being implemented equitably and affordably. We celebrate the progress that has been made with the passage of all-electric new construction, funding for the EmPower+ program, expansion of the Energy Affordability Program, and your commitment to two million climate-friendly homes by 2030. But now New Yorkers need you to take the next steps outlined in the Final Scoping Plan and stop utilities from dumping money into short-sighted investments in fracked gas pipelines that we no longer need.

New York has set the standard for transitioning to clean energy in buildings nationally, as demonstrated by your leadership with 24 other Governors in calling for quadrupling heat pump deployment by 2030. New York must continue to lead by enacting cutting-edge policies that will deliver the energy savings, comfortable homes, and a livable planet promised by your Final Scoping Plan. Passing these policies will build on your legacy of leadership and make meaningful progress toward a better New York.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations. We look forward to continuing this work with you toward improving living conditions, health, economy, and climate for all New Yorkers.

Sincerely,

Alliance for a Green Economy  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
New York League of Conservation Voters  
WE ACT for Environmental Justice  
Building Decarbonization Coalition  
ALIGN: The Alliance for a Greater New York  
Association for Energy Affordability  
Building Performance Contractors Association of  
NYS Inc.  
Climate Solutions Accelerator of the Genesee-Finger  
Lakes Region  
Environmental Advocates NY  
NY Renews Coalition  
Regional Plan Association  
Concerned Health Professionals of New York  
Earthjustice  
Environmental Defense Fund  
Food & Water Watch  
Long Island Progressive Coalition  
NYC Environmental Justice Alliance  
Citizen Action of New York  
Urban Green Council  
True Building Performance  
Wise Home Energy  
Aztech Geothermal, LLC  
350Brooklyn  
350NYC  
American Association of University Women-  
Kingston  
All Our Energy  
Alternative Carbon Energy Systems Inc  
Beacon Climate Action Now  
Bedford 2030  
Bethlehem Morning Voice Huddle  
Big Reuse  
Bronx Climate Justice North  
Bronx Jews for Climate Action  
Brooklyn for Peace  
Buffalo Energy, Inc.  
Buffalo Geothermal LLC

New York Geothermal Energy Organization  
NYPIRG  
Renewable Heat Now  
Rewiring America  
Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter  
Vote Solar  
Adirondack Voters for Change  
E2 Environmental Entrepreneurs  
Dandelion Energy  
Frack Action  
For the Many  
Mothers Out Front  
New York State Public Health Association  
New Yorkers for Clean Power  
New York Sustainable Business Council  
Partnership for the Public Good  
South Bronx Unite  
SunCommon  
TREEAge  
HIGHMARK | Building Efficiency  
Halco  
Energy Catalyst Technologies  
El Puente  
Sane Energy Project  
Jewish Climate Action Network NYC  
Justice Ministries Committee, Presbytery of  
NYC  
Urban Homesteading Assistance Board  
Church Women United in New York State  
Campaign for Renewable Energy  
Climate Change Awareness and Action  
Climate Change Resources, Inc.  
Climate Control Group  
Climate Families NYC  
Climate Justice Cornell  
Citizens' Climate Lobby of New York State  
Citizens' Climate Lobby- Brooklyn  
Citizens' Climate Lobby- Mid Hudson  
Citizens' Climate Lobby- New York City  
Citizens' Climate Lobby- Rochester

Citizens' Climate Lobby- Staten Island  
Citizens' Climate Lobby- Westchester  
ClimateMama  
Climate Master, Inc.  
CNY Solidarity Coalition  
Coalition Against the Rockaway Pipeline  
Coalition for Outreach, Policy & Coordination  
Coalition for Wetlands and Forests  
Coalition to Protect New York  
Color Penfield Green  
Color Rush Henrietta Green  
Committee to Preserve the Finger Lakes  
Communities for Local Power  
Community Advocates for a Sustainable Environment  
Congregation Tikun V'Or, CJ Council  
Ecosave  
Elmirans and Friends Against Fracking  
Energy Allies  
Energy Catalyst Technologies  
Extinction Rebellion Mid-Hudson  
Finger Lakes Climate Fund  
Fossil Free Tompkins  
FrackBusters NY  
Grassroots Environmental Educaiton  
Greater Syracuse Tenants Network  
Green Choices Consulting  
Green Ossining  
Green Party of Onondaga County  
Green Team LI  
Greening USA  
HabitatMap  
Indian Point Safe Energy Coalition  
Indivisible Brooklyn  
Indivisible Harlem  
Indivisible Mohawk Valley- Climate Crisis Working Group  
Indivisible New Rochelle  
Indivisible Scarsdale  
Inwood Indivisible  
Kinetic Communities

Long Island Activists  
LaMorte Electric Heating and Cooling  
Melissa Carlson, Architect  
Metro Justice  
Mothers Out Front- Tompkins  
Mothers Out Front- Dutchess County  
Mothers Out Front- Westchester Rivertowns  
Nassau Hiking & Outdoor Club  
Network for a Sustainable Tomorrow  
New York Climate Action Group  
New York Climate Advocacy Project  
New York Interfaith Power & Light  
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest  
New York Progressive Action Network  
New York Youth Climate Leaders  
No North Brooklyn Pipeline  
North American Climate, Conservation, and Environment  
North Bronx Racial Justice  
North Country NYPAN  
Northwest Bronx Indivisible  
NP Environmental, LLC  
NYC 2030 District  
NYCD16 Indivisible  
NY Energy Democracy Alliance  
NYPAN of the Southern Fingers Lakes  
Outdoor Promise  
Pace Energy and Climate Center  
Pachamama Alliance of the Rochester Area  
PathStone Corporation  
Peace Action Bay Ridge  
Peace Action New York State  
Peekskill Progressives  
People for a Healthy Environment  
Peoples Climate Movement- NY  
Plant Native NW Bronx  
Possible Rochester  
Progressive Schenectady  
Putnam Progressives  
Queens Climate Project  
Ratepayer and Community Intervenors

Renewable Energy Long Island  
Residents Allied for the Future of Tioga  
Rise and Resist  
Rivers & Mountains GreenFaith  
Riverside Salem UCC/DoC  
RocACTS Climate Justice Task Force  
Rochester Area Interfaith Climate Action  
Rockaway Women for Progress  
Roctricity LLC  
RPI Sunrise Movement  
Safe Energy Rights Movement  
Salas O'Brien  
Sanfilippo Solutions Inc.  
Seneca Lake Guardian  
Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, NY  
Sixth Street Community Center  
Solarize Albany  
South Asian Fund for Education Scholarship and  
Training  
South Shore Audubon Society  
Start:Empowerment  
Staten Island Urban Center  
Stop NY Fracked Gas Pipeline  
Stop the Algonquin Pipeline Expansion  
Students for Climate Action  
Sullivan Alliance for Sustainable Development  
Sunrise Movement NYC  
SUNY New Paltz Environmental Task Force  
Supporters of Horseshoe Solar  
Sustainable Fingers Lakes  
Sustainable Putnam  
Sustainable Saratoga  
Sustainable Warwick  
Sustainable Westchester  
Syracuse Cultural Workers  
Syracuse Peace Council  
Syracuse United Neighbors  
Taitem Engineering

The Climate Reality Project, Capital Region  
Chapter  
The Climate Reality Project, Finger Lakes  
Greater Region Chapter  
The Climate Reality Project, Hudson Valley &  
Catskills Chapter  
The Climate Reality Project, Long Island  
Chapter  
The Climate Reality Project, NYC Chapter  
The Climate Reality Project, Westchester  
County  
The Climate Reality Project, Western New  
York Chapter  
The Insulation Man, LLC  
The Park Church in Elmira  
Third Act Upstate New York  
Tompkins County Climate Protection Initiative  
Tompkins County Progressives  
Transition Town Port Washington  
United for Action  
United for Clean Energy  
Urban Jobs Task Force of Syracuse  
Urbecon LLC  
UU Congregation of Binghamton, Green  
Sanctuary  
WESPAC Foundation  
Westchester Alliance for Sustainable Solutions  
Westchester for Change  
Western New York Environmental Alliance  
Win Climate  
WNY Drilling Defense  
WNY Youth Climate Council  
Yorktown 100



Adirondack Voters for Change  
P.O. Box 988  
Saranac Lake, NY 12983  
vfc2014ny@gmail.com



Bronx Jews for Climate Action



Campaign for Renewable Energy



Citizens' Climate Lobby Rochester, NY

Citizens' Climate Lobby Staten Island, NY

Citizens' Climate Lobby New York State



Citizens' Climate Lobby Westchester



Coalition for Outreach, Policy & Coordination



Coalition for Wetlands and Forests



Elmirans and Friends Against Fracking



Finding the ways that work

Extinction Rebellion Mid-Hudson



Comfort today. Energy for tomorrow.







Justice  
Ministries  
Committee,  
Presbytery of  
NYC

**KINETIC  
COMMUNITIES**  
CONSULTING



LaMorte Electric  
Heating and Cooling



Melissa Carlson, Architect



Nassau Hiking & Outdoor Club, Inc.

AFFILIATED WITH N.Y. - N.J. TRAIL CONFERENCE

[www.nassauhiking.org](http://www.nassauhiking.org)



nest  
— network for a sustainable tomorrow —



**NY Climate  
ADVOCACY PROJECT**

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ENERGY DEMOCRACY ALLIANCE

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COMMUNITY POWER



New York State  
**PHA**  
Public Health  
Association

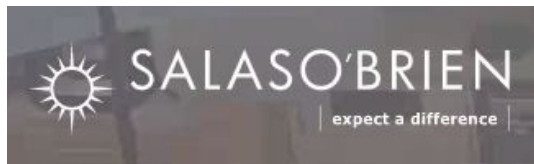
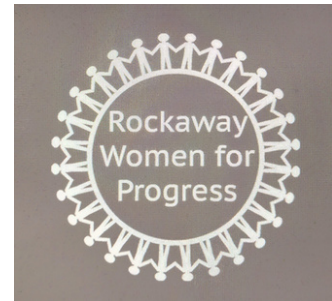


Possible  
Rochester  
for business

PROGRESSIVE  
SCHENECTADY



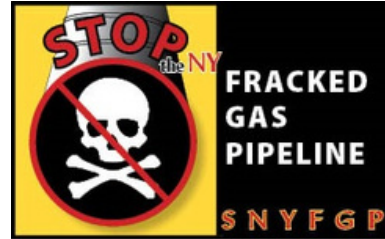
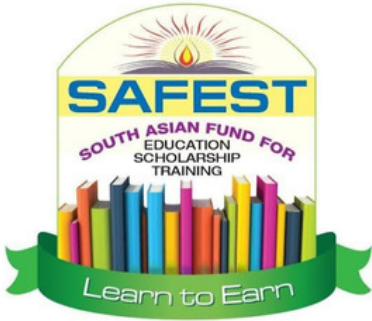
Ratepayer and  
Community  
Intervenor





# South Bronx Unite

## START:EMPOWERMENT



SASD | Sullivan Alliance for Sustainable Development

### suncommon



### Sustainable Saratoga

Educate. | Advocate. | Act.

### SUNY New Paltz Environmental Task Force





# TREEAGE



United for  
Clean  
Energy

