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

October 20, 2021  

Dear Governor Hochul:  

Congratulations on your elevation to Governor of New York. We represent organizations committed to fighting climate change with equitable solutions that benefit the communities suffering the worst impacts of pollution and with the least access to clean energy. We urge you to make a massive investment in better buildings in New York, starting in disadvantaged urban and rural communities, where buildings are the least efficient and costs are highest.  

Better buildings means housing that is affordable, free of indoor pollution, and environmentally sustainable. It means workplaces and schools that are comfortable, healthy, and sustainable. Better buildings should contribute to resilient communities where the rights of tenants and undocumented residents are protected, and where generational wealth can be built by Black and Brown households.  

Buildings account for one-third of New York’s greenhouse gas emissions because most of us still warm our spaces, cook our food, and heat our water by burning fossil fuels right inside our buildings. Now, we must equitably phase out these fossil fuels and ensure that people can afford to switch to modern geothermal and air source heat pumps and induction stoves - a process called beneficial electrification.  

Please take action in your upcoming State of the State and 2022 legislative agenda to:  

- Set a state target of at least 2 million energy-efficient, all-electric homes by 2030, at least half of which will be new and existing affordable housing in and for Disadvantaged Communities  
- Create a Green Affordable Housing Fund for Disadvantaged Communities  
- End fossil fuel expansion with building standards and utility regulation  
- Create thousands of high quality, high-paying career jobs, with priority for disadvantaged communities and priority populations  

In New York State, we take pride in having passed the most aggressive and equitable climate legislation in the country. But we have woefully underinvested in housing in Black, Brown and low-income communities, compounding decades of harm from redlining, gentrification and
inequitable access to everything from heating and air-conditioning to shade trees. This legacy of disinvestment has led to deferred maintenance and the presence of mold, asbestos, and lead in our homes. These hazards harm our health, create barriers to weatherization and energy efficiency, and contribute to disproportionate exposure to extreme heat and cold. Now, we are learning that combustion of fossil fuels for cooking and heating exacerbates asthma and other respiratory ailments. A report from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health published in May shows that New York leads the nation in premature deaths from burning gas in buildings with almost 1,000 deaths annually.

The following steps can remedy these ills and put our state on the path to a just and equitable transition:

**Make at least 2 million homes all-electric, highly efficient by 2030**
We call on you to set a statewide target of at least 2 million energy-efficient, all-electric homes by 2030, with at least half representing existing or new affordable housing in and for Disadvantaged Communities, as will be identified by the Climate Action Council’s Climate Justice Working Group.

**Launch a Green Affordable Housing Fund for Disadvantaged Communities**
Build upon your $59 million building decarbonization initiative for schools in disadvantaged communities with a major public investment in fossil-free buildings in Disadvantaged Communities. This fund should pay for tightening the building envelope, improving heat pump and induction stove incentives, upgrading electrical panels, and developing new high performance affordable multifamily buildings. It should also provide weatherization and pre-electrification funding and financing to address the health hazards, structural issues, and electrical requirements needed for efficiency and electrification. Without these investments in pre-efficiency and pre-electrification measures, many buildings - particularly those in Disadvantaged Communities - will not be able to electrify, which will deepen existing inequities. The Fund should leverage federal funding and refundable tax credits with new and existing programs at NYSERDA, the NY Green Bank, Homes and Community Renewal (HCR), the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY), the New York Power Authority (NYPA) and the state’s utilities. The Green Bank alone could invest $500 million in this sector, and if New York deployed just 5% of its American Rescue Plan funds to upgrade affordable housing, as Maine has done, we could invest another $600 million.

**End fossil fuel expansion with building standards and utility regulation**
Modernize building codes to require new buildings to be all-electric and highly efficient, starting in 2024 with accommodations for technical feasibility. Phase out fossil fuels from existing buildings, and launch programs today that pave the way for a 2028 all-electric standard for new heating equipment and appliances. Ensure that all large buildings benchmark and report their
energy usage transparently. Lead by example by encouraging K-12 schools to decarbonize and requiring all state buildings and public colleges to be retrofitted and fully electrified.

These standards should be complemented by supportive energy utility regulations that:

- remove subsidies that fund utility gas line extensions to new customers,
- require a gas planning process that imposes emissions limits on gas utilities and delivers on the equitable clean energy transition mandated by the CLCPA,
- address operating costs by ensuring affordable electricity, delivering on and going beyond the promise that no household should pay more than 6% of their income for energy, and
- finalize a regulatory plan and pathway in 2022 for fully phasing out fossil fuels in buildings.

Create thousands of high quality, high-paying career jobs, with priority for Disadvantaged Communities and priority populations

NYSERDA's Clean Energy Industry Report shows we have already created over 125,000 jobs for building contractors, electricians, plumbers and others to make our buildings more energy efficient -- over three quarters of New York’s clean energy jobs. Adopting policies to drive electrification and dramatically increase coverage of affordable housing can more than double this figure, help us rebuild our economy, and make New York a jobs and economic powerhouse in decarbonization. The state should ensure that at least half of these jobs go to Disadvantaged Communities and should create on-the-job training and certification/degree programs, union apprenticeship programs, and regional hiring halls. Heat pump and induction stove bulk purchasing programs could attract manufacturing to the state. State agencies can also encourage the development of clean thermal utility networks, which show promise to retrain utility workers and scale clean heating in populated areas. In short, all agencies engaged in building decarbonization and energy efficiency should fully leverage their procurement, contracting, licensing, permitting, credentialing, program participation, subsidy, and incentive power vis-a-vis industry to lock in enforceable commitments to job access (recruitment, hiring, etc.) and job quality (wages, benefits, working conditions, etc.) to see verifiable and sustainable returns on public investment in job training and workforce development.

You have an opportunity to transform New York’s buildings with funding and policies that will improve our health and quality of life, increase housing affordability in underserved, under-represented, and historically excluded communities, and create hundreds of thousands of good jobs -- all while attacking the climate crisis head on.

We look forward to sharing more details and working with you to make a historic investment to improve our living conditions, our health, our economy, and our climate.

Sincerely,
AAUW Kingston NY
ABC Earth Care Team
Acadia Center
Air Source LLC
All Our Energy
Alliance for Clean Energy NY
Alliance for a Green Economy
Alternative Carbon Energy Systems, Inc.
Anthony's Heating and Contracting LLC
Association for Energy Affordability
Aztech Geothermal, LLC
Bedford 2030
Big Reuse
Brian R Duggan, JD, PG Environmental Professional
Bright Energy Services
Bronx Climate Justice North
Bronx Jews for Climate Action
Brooklyn For Peace
Broome Tioga Green Party
Buffalo Geothermal LLC
Building Decarbonization Coalition
Building Performance Contractors Association of NY
Campaign for Renewable Energy
Catskill Mountainkeeper
Church Women United in New York State
Citizen Action of New York
Citizens For Local Power
Citizens' Environmental Coalition
Climate Action Campaign
Climate Change Awareness & Action
Climate Justice Cornell
Climate Reality Finger Lakes Greater Region NY Chapter
Climate Reality Project - Hudson Valley & Catskills Chapter
Climate Reality Project - Peconic Region
Climate Reality Project - Westchester Chapter
Climate Smart Philipstown
Climate Solutions Accelerator of the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region
ClimateMama
ClimateMaster, Inc.
Green Ossining
Green Party of Onondaga County
Green Team LI
Greenfaith LI
GreeningUSA
HabitatMap
Healing and Protecting Our Land Together - A Call to Prayer
Heat/Cool Smart Brooklyn
HeatSmart CNY
HIGHMARK Building Efficiency
Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc.
Hudson Valley Green Party
Indivisible Harlem
Integral Building + Design
Interfaith Climate Justice Community
Interfaith Climate Justice Community of WNY
LaMorte Electric Heating and Cooling
Long Island Activists
Long Island Progressive Coalition
Margert Community Corporation
Metro New York Chapter, Climate Reality Project
Mothers Out Front (Adirondacks)
Mothers Out Front Chemung County
Mothers Out Front Dutchess County
Mothers Out Front - Long Island
Mothers Out Front New York
Mothers Out Front Westchester Rivertowns
Mothers Out Front- Tompkins
NAACP Mid Manhattan Branch
Nassau Hiking & Outdoor Club
Natural Resources Defense Council
Network for a Sustainable Tomorrow
New Paltz Climate Action Coalition
New Paltz Climate Smart
New Paltz Interfaith Earth Action
New York City Environmental Justice Alliance
New York Climate Action Group
New York Community Energy Cooperative
New York Geothermal Foundation
New York League of Conservation Voters
New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG)
New York State Nurses Association
New York State Public Health Association
New York Youth Climate Leaders
New Yorkers for Clean Power
North American Climate, Conservation and Environment (NACCE)
North Bronx Racial Justice
North Country Earth Action
Northern Westchester Mothers Out Front
NP Environmental, LLC
NY Climate Advocacy Project
NY Energy Democracy Alliance
NY-GEO New York Geothermal Energy Organization
NYC 2030 District
NYPAN Greene
Orange R.A.P.P. (Residents Against Pilgrim Pipelines)
Partnership for Policy Integrity
Partnership for the Public Good
PathStone Corporation
PAUSE (People of Albany United for Safe Energy)
Peace & Justice Committee
Peace Action New York State
People for a Healthy Environment
Peoples Climate Movement - NY
Plymouth Friends of Clean Water
Possible Rochester | Possible Planet
Progressive Women of NY
Protecting Our Waters
PUSH Buffalo
Putnam Progressives
Ratepayer and Community Intervenors
Regional Plan Association
Renewable Energy Long Island
Renewable Heat Now
Residents Allied for the Future of Tioga (RAFT)
Resist Spectra
Riverkeeper
Rochester Area Interfaith Climate Action (RAICA)
Rockland Goes Green
Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI)
RUPCO
Rural Housing Opportunities Corp.
Safe Energy Rights Group
Sane Energy Project
Sanford-Oquaga Area Concerned Citizens (S-OACC)
Seneca Lake Guardian
Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter
Sisters of Charity Federation
Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, New York
Sixth Street Community Center
Solar Tompkins
Solarize Albany
Solstice Initiative
South Asian Fund for Education Scholarship and Training
South Shore Audubon Society
Southern Door Community Land Trust, Inc.
Southern Tier Interfaith Coalition
Stop NY Fracked Gas Pipeline
Stop the Algonquin Pipeline Expansion
StopCricketValley.org
Sullivan Alliance for Sustainable Development
SunCommon
Sunrise Ithaca
Sunrise NYC
Sunrise Rochester
Sustainable Hudson Valley
Sustainable Tompkins, Inc.
Sustainable Warwick
Sustainable Westchester Inc.
Syracuse Cultural Workers
Syracuse Democratic Socialists of America (DSA)
Syracuse Peace Council
TAP Inc
The Insulation Man, LLC
Tompkins County Climate Protection Initiative
Tompkins County Progressives
Transition Town Port Washington
United for Action
United for Clean Energy
Universal Human Rights Defenders Coalition
Urban Jobs Task Force
Urbecon LLC
UU Congregation of Binghamton, Green Sanctuary
Village of New Paltz
WASS (Westchester Alliance for Sustainable Solutions)
WE ACT for Environmental Justice
WESPAC Foundation, Inc.
West Harlem progressive Democratic Club
Westchester for Change
Western New York Environmental Alliance
Western NY Drilling Defense
Wise Home Energy
Workers Center of Central New York
350Brooklyn
350NYC

Cc:
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Assembly member Steven Cymbrowitz, Chair Housing