



**ENVIRONMENTAL  
ADVOCATES OF NEW YORK**

YOUR GOVERNMENT WATCHDOG

December 9, 2014

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor  
State of New York  
Executive Chamber  
State Capitol  
Albany, NY 12247

**RE: Climate Planning in \$700 Million Regional Council Awards**

Dear Governor Cuomo:

On Wednesday, you are expected to award more than \$700 million in grants and tax breaks through your regional development councils. In the past, it's been unclear whether these publicly financed incentives were developed with any consideration towards the impacts of our changing climate. However, this round of awards is the first since your September 22, 2014 signing of the Community Risk and Resiliency Act.

In announcing this new law you said: *"The Community Risk and Resiliency Act requires State agencies to consider future physical climate risks caused by storm surges, sea level rise or flooding in certain permitting, funding and regulatory decisions."* Though the law does not explicitly apply to all state agencies and authorities, it could and they will follow the law at your direction. Ensuring the law's principles were incorporated into the forthcoming awards is the first opportunity for you to demonstrate how you have implemented this important measure, setting a critical standard for future roundtable awards and, in fact, actions across your administration.

With impending decisions on issues like fracking and the transshipment of tar sands through our state, there should be clear and established consideration of climate impacts in all of your administration's decisions. Because the impacts of our changing climate are continuing to mount it is equally important that all state decisions such as grants for economic development, permits issued by the Department of Environmental Conservation, or infrastructure projects, are all weighed against the state's commitment to cutting climate disrupting pollution 80 percent from 1990 levels by the year 2050. As you know, a sound economic development plan cannot ignore current and future climate change. In fact, a plan to cut climate pollution should be as much as an economic blueprint as a health and environmental imperative.

Environmental Advocates of New York strongly urges your administration to fully release along with the announcement of these awards all relevant climate considerations as should be done in the spirit of the Community Risk and Resiliency Act. This will help set the tone for government and private enterprise moving forward. Importantly, it will ensure that any time public dollars are invested it

occurs with a demonstrable eye towards the future, rather than risking the further exacerbation of our climate problems or requiring additional funds in the future to harden projects against climate change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter M. Iwanowicz". The signature is stylized with a large initial "P" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Peter M. Iwanowicz  
Executive Director

cc: Joseph Martens, Commissioner, Department of Environmental Conservation  
Kenneth Adams, President & CEO, Empire State Development and Commissioner,  
Department of Economic Development  
Richard Kauffman, Chair, Energy & Finance for New York  
Basil Seggos, Deputy Secretary for the Environment  
Kara Allen, Assistant Secretary for Energy