



August 30, 2016

Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
Executive Chamber
New York State Capitol
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

NY RENEWS is an unprecedented statewide coalition fighting for climate policies grounded in equity and justice for communities and working people. We are community-based organizations, environmental justice groups, labor unions, and other advocates working together to ensure New York achieves ambitious and far-reaching climate solutions.

We call on your leadership to push for strong climate programs so that life-threatening pollution is reduced, frontline communities are protected, and resources are dedicated and policies put in place to ensure a Just Transition to the new energy economy.

As New York prepares an implementation plan for the EPA's Clean Power Plan (CPP) and continues to participate in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) program review, your administration will be making critical decisions that promise to impact climate policy in the state and the region for years to come. You have an opportunity to begin to build a truly sustainable and climate resilient New York. With your leadership, New York can continue to demonstrate how to abate climate pollution while simultaneously boosting the economy and improving public health.

New York's implementation of the CPP and the next iteration of RGGI should include the following core components:

- An aggressively declining cap on power sector emissions that is consistent with the state's economy-wide climate pollution reduction target of 80% by 2050 – modeling shows that the RGGI cap on carbon pollution must decrease by 5% each year if the state is to meet its goal;
- A regulatory definition and subsequent identification of Disadvantaged Communities that bear burdens of negative public health effects, environmental pollution, and impacts of climate change, and possess certain socioeconomic criteria, developed with input from stakeholders representing the communities likely to be identified;
- Regulatory measures to maximize reductions of both greenhouse gases and co-pollutants in Disadvantaged Communities, with plans for early action toward these reductions for both RGGI-regulated facilities and other power plants, and regulations designed to capture facilities currently operating with multiple units that are individually under the 25 MW threshold;
- Investments of RGGI proceeds that prioritize frontline, environmental justice, and Disadvantaged Communities, with at least 40% of the operating budget dedicated to projects that directly benefit the identified communities;

- An equity analysis of RGGI and other climate investments regarding the specific needs of Disadvantaged Communities;
- A plan for community-driven Just Transition processes to identify the needs – and the resources necessary to address those needs – of whole communities impacted by the shift away from a fossil-fuel based economy. Whole communities include workplaces, homes, schools, communities of faith, and community institutions;
- A Just Transition plan for workers of and communities home to fossil-fuel based industry to ensure leadership in the regenerative energy economy, which includes pathways for good-paying jobs with fair labor standards;
- The prohibition of the deployment of generating facilities that utilize waste-to-energy or wood combustion technologies as compliance options – New York’s CPP implementation plan and RGGI should develop a clearer definition of renewable energy that doesn’t allow for false solutions;
- The prohibition of any trading with states that fail to adopt plans that cover both new and existing power plants; and
- With regard to the ongoing public comment period on the Clean Energy Incentive Program (CEIP), we urge the state to submit comments to the EPA supporting a continued emphasis on incentivizing renewable energy and energy efficiency investments in low-income communities, but without allowing for any increase in available allowances.

A strong and equitable Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative and state implementation plan for the Clean Power Plan will make our state a model for the nation. A stronger cap on climate pollution is needed to protect communities on the front lines of climate change. While climate change affects everyone, it is having a devastating impact on New York’s low-income residents, communities of color, immigrants, and other vulnerable communities. Extreme weather is wreaking havoc on New York’s agricultural and tourism economies. Air pollution exacerbates chronic health conditions, triggering asthma attacks and other health problems, such as heat exhaustion and heatstroke. And when a major storm hits, disadvantaged communities are often the last to see relief.

New York needs to refocus its climate programs to prioritize investments in these frontline communities. The funds raised by RGGI should go toward renewable energy, energy efficiency, and pollution mitigation projects in communities hit hardest by the impacts of climate change. New York’s RGGI spending cannot further disadvantage these communities. Lastly, as fossil fuels become less viable, we believe that the state’s resources would be well spent to help New Yorkers transition and thrive in the new energy economy.

We appreciate your attention to this important matter, and we look forward to working with you and your administration to make New York State the climate leader our nation needs.

Sincerely,

NY Renews

CC:

Jim Malatras, Director of State Operations, Office of the Governor
 Richard Kauffman, Chairman of Energy and Finance for New York, Office of the Governor
 John Rhodes, President and CEO, New York State Energy Research and Development Authority
 Audrey Zibelman, Chair, New York State Public Service Commission
 Basil Seggos, Commissioner, Department of Environmental Conservation
 Rosemary Powers, Deputy Director of State Operations for Programs, Office of the Governor
 Venetia Lannon, Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Office of the Governor
 Kate Dineen, Assistant Secretary for the Environment, Office of the Governor
 Jared Snyder, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Environmental Conservation
 Lois New, Director, Office of Climate Change, Department of Environmental Conservation

The following organizations have endorsed the NY Renew's platform:

1199 SEIU	32BJ SEIU
350 Brooklyn	350 Capital Region
350 NYC	AVillage, Inc.
ALIGN	Alliance for a Green Economy
All Our Energy	Binghamton Regional Sustainability Coalition
Bronx Climate Justice North	Buffalo Coalition for Economic Justice
Campaign for Renewable Energy	Catskill Mountainkeeper
Center for Popular Democracy	Center for Social Inclusion
Center For Working Families	Citizen Action of New York
Clean Energy Technology Resources, LLC	Climate Caucus of the West Harlem Progressive Democratic Club
Climate Changers	Coalition for Sustainable Economic Development
Climate Justice Coalition of WNY	Communications Workers of America District 1
Community Voices Heard	Demos
El Puente	Emerald Cities Collaborative
Environmental Advocates of New York	Environment New York
Faith in New York	Food & Water Watch
GreenFaith	GOLES
Here Now	Interfaith Climate Justice Community of WNY
Labor Religion Coalition of New York State	Long Island Progressive Coalition
Make the Road New York	Massachusetts Avenue Project
Mothers on the Move	NACA
New York Communities for Change	New Economy Project
New York Interfaith Power and Light	New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
New York Working Families	NYC Environmental Justice Alliance
NYS Amalgamated Transit Union	NYS Nurses Association
NYS Transport Workers Union Local 100	NYS United Teachers

Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy
Coalition

Partnership for the Public Good

People of Albany United for Safe Energy

People's Climate Movement Capital Region

PUSH Buffalo

Rochester People's Climate Coalition

Sierra Club

Solutions Project

Sustainable Tompkins

Teamsters Joint Council 16

The Morningside Hts - W. Harlem Sanitation
Coalition, Inc.

UAW Region 9

Ujima Company, Inc.

UPROSE

WE ACT for Environmental Justice

Open Buffalo

Patagonia

People's Climate Arts

People's Climate Movement NY

Renewable Energy Long Island

Sane Energy Project

Solidarity Committee of the Capital District

Southern Tier Solar Works

Syracuse United Neighbors

The Bernie Sanders Network

THE POINT CDC

UAW Region 9A

United University Professions

WASH Project, Inc.