

**350Brooklyn • Acadia Center • All Our Energy • Alliance for a Green Economy
Alliance for Clean Energy New York • Artemis Productions • Big Reuse
Campaign for Renewable Energy • Citizens Campaign for the Environment
Earthjustice • Environmental Action Coalition • Environmental Advocates NY
Fossil Free Tompkins • Long Island Progressive Coalition
Natural Resources Defense Council • Network for a Sustainable Tomorrow
New York League of Conservation Voters
New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG)
NYC Environmental Justice Alliance • Renewable Energy Long Island (reLI)
Seneca Lake Guardian • The Nature Conservancy**

February 15, 2022

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
Executive Chamber
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul:

As you consider submitting 30-day amendments to the Executive Budget we urge you to take the opportunity to remove a provision that would divert \$23 million of Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) funds to pay for tax credits that would otherwise be supported by the General Fund. Tax credits, established more than a decade prior to the existence of RGGI, offer little to no direct benefit to the lower income and environmental justice communities that are disproportionately burdened by the impacts of climate change and fossil fuel derived pollution.

Regrettably, since 2014, \$228 million (17.5% of the total) of RGGI funds have been transferred to the state's General Fund, depriving New Yorkers of funding that could have lowered energy bills, created good jobs, and helped reduce emissions. Diverting these funds is inconsistent with the state's responsibility to address the equity mandates of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA). Removing the provision transferring the funds to the budget will present an opportunity to dedicate the funds to programs designed to serve New Yorkers that do not currently have equitable access to programs offered by NYSERDA, providing communities on the front lines of climate change with new, and needed, opportunities to tap into the economic and health benefits energy efficiency and clean, renewable energy systems provide.

It is important that RGGI funds be used to help the State meet the climate, clean energy, and equity goals dictated by CLCPA which requires the state to transition to an emissions-free electric grid by 2040 and achieve an 85% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by 2050. A core component of the climate law is the requirement that no less than 35-40% of climate and clean energy funds benefit disadvantaged communities. RGGI

funded programs will be essential to meeting this mandate and delivering jobs and GHG emission and co-pollutant reductions to the communities that have been hit hardest by fossil fuel-derived pollution.

The successful transition to a renewable energy economy will be predicated on continued, robust, and sustainable funding of programs that support the development of renewable generation, community solar, energy efficiency, transportation electrification, community energy planning, and energy innovation. All these programs create jobs, impact market decisions, and generate direct benefits to communities across New York.

We respectfully urge you reverse the previous administration's tendency to repurpose climate funds by using the 30-day amendment process to ensure climate and clean energy investments are dedicated to meeting our climate goals and making New York State a healthier, more affordable, and more sustainable place to live. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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