

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**August 6, 2009****GOVERNOR PATERSON SIGNS EXECUTIVE ORDER TO REDUCE NEW YORK'S GREENHOUSE GAS POLLUTION*****Executive Order to Tackle Climate Change by Setting Goal of Reducing Emissions by 80 Percent by 2050******Requires a Climate Action Plan on How to Reduce Greenhouse Gases***

Governor David A. Paterson today signed Executive Order No. 24 setting a goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in New York State by 80 percent below the levels emitted in 1990 by the year 2050. The Executive Order also creates a Climate Action Council with a directive to prepare a draft Climate Action Plan by September 30, 2010. The Climate Action Plan will assess how all economic sectors can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change, as well as identify the extent to which such actions support New York's goals for a clean energy economy.

"Climate change is the most pressing environmental issue of our time. By taking action, we send a signal that New Yorkers will do our share to address the climate crisis and we will do it in a way that creates opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship to flourish," said Governor Paterson. "One way we will achieve this goal is by focusing our efforts on a clean energy economy that will create jobs for New Yorkers."

This Executive Order will build on the progress the State has made to date. Governor Paterson has already taken a number of steps to address the climate crisis in New York through innovative, cost-effective policies and programs such as the award winning Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), stricter automobile greenhouse gas emission standards and the "45 by 15" program for expanding efficiency measures and renewable energy. State programs and incentives are working in concert with federal efforts to increase the use of clean energy technologies and to promote emission reductions.

Future climate change will impose significant economic burdens on New York. Heat-related mortality in the New York City metropolitan region could increase by 47 to 95 percent when compared to 1990 levels. New York's public drinking water supplies may also be compromised by changes in temperature and precipitation. In addition, a warmer climate will adversely affect the State's crucial dairy production and crops, including grain, apples and potatoes, resulting in a potential increase in the cost of food.

Though it is anticipated that reductions in greenhouse gas emissions will be paramount, the Climate Action Plan will also include adaptation measures that will safeguard people, the environment and our infrastructure from expected climatic changes.

Momentum to address climate change is building at the federal level. President Obama has set a national goal of at least an 80 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The House of Representatives recently passed the American Clean Energy and Security Act, establishing a national climate program to reduce emissions by 83 percent below 2005 levels by 2050. Governor Paterson also urges the U.S. Senate to pass comprehensive climate and energy legislation.

The Climate Action Council will consist of the Commissioners of the Departments of Agriculture and Markets, Environmental Conservation, Housing and Community Renewal and Transportation; the President and CEO of Empire State Development; the Chair of the Public Service Commission; the Presidents of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Dormitory Authority, the New York Power Authority and the Long Island Power Authority; the Secretary of State; the Director of the Budget; the Director of State Operations; and the Counsel to the Governor. The Director of State Operations shall serve as the Chair of the Council.

The Executive Order requires that the Council hold regional public comment hearings on the draft Plan and allow at least 60 days for the submission of written public comment. Thereafter, the Council shall prepare a final Plan which shall be reviewed and, if warranted, adjusted annually by the Council.

The following statements were provided in support of the Executive Order:

Pete Grannis, Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation, said: "Governor Paterson is leading the charge to make New York more energy independent and energy efficient. From launching the nation's first greenhouse gas allowance auctions to increasing the use of clean energy, Governor Paterson has implemented one of the most aggressive climate change and energy security programs in the nation. This new initiative is a bold step in tackling the climate crisis."

Carol E. Murphy, Executive Director of the Alliance for Clean Energy New York, said: "Changing our energy consumption to meet the challenge of global climate change is the most pressing environmental and economic dilemma we face. We applaud the Governor for confronting this challenge head on and setting an aggressive goal - a necessary one according to the scientific experts - to help move us in the right direction. We believe New Yorkers can rise to the challenge with clean, renewable technologies and find solutions that help create a thriving green economy."

Robert Moore, Executive Director of Environmental Advocates of New York, said: "Governor David Paterson is taking an historic step to restore New York's leadership in the arena of global warming. While opposition exists to reducing the pollution that is already changing New York's climate, the Governor recognizes that our economy and our environment will only benefit from decisive action to combat the greatest environmental threat of our generation."

Curtis Fisher, Regional Executive Director of the National Wildlife Federation's Northeast Natural Resource Center, said: "Governor Paterson's leadership will create clean energy jobs, save individuals and businesses money on their energy bills, promote domestic security and reduce global warming pollution. It also sends the right message to members of Congress who are working on energy and climate legislation. We commend the entire Administration's efforts to safeguard communities, wildlife and our natural resources from the impacts of global warming."