

March 19, 2015

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

Hon. Carl E. Heastie
Speaker
New York State Assembly
LOB 932
Albany, New York 12248

Hon. Dean G. Skelos
Temporary President
New York State Senate
LOB 909
Albany, New York 12247

Dear Governor Cuomo, Speaker Heastie and Temporary President Skelos:

As negotiations proceed on the 2015 – 2016 New York State Budget, we respectfully request the adoption of a final spending plan that avoids repurposing climate pollution funds raised through New York’s participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). We strongly support the position taken in the Assembly budget resolution rejecting the proposal included in the Executive Budget to transfer \$36 million in RGGI proceeds to the General Fund, a position the undersigned and others opposed after the initial release of the Executive Budget in January.

We are equally opposed to proposals included in the Senate budget resolution to redirect \$64 million in climate funds and an undetermined amount of additional NYSEERDA clean energy resources. The fact that the Assembly budget provides increased Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) funding without shifting dollars from other environmental programs demonstrates that the proposed diversion of RGGI revenues is not a question of addressing general fund shortfalls and more a question of spending priorities.

Further, the recent announcement of an additional infusion of \$610 million funding through the Commerzbank represents an unanticipated windfall that could be utilized to enhance the state’s commitment to environmental and public health programs without jeopardizing New York’s future participation in RGGI through the diversion of climate funds from the uses dictated by the program’s governing regulations.

Since the impacts of climate change are mounting, the need to reduce the pollution fueling it is urgent. RGGI has been proven to be an effective tool in moving New York forward toward our goal to reduce climate pollutants 80 percent by 2050. New York should adopt a budget that does not repurpose RGGI proceeds.

Sincerely,

Acadia Center
Adirondack Mountain Club
Alliance for a Green Economy
American Lung Association in New York
Association for Energy Affordability
Binghamton Regional Sustainability Coalition
Center for Working Families
Citizens Campaign for the Environment
Citizens’ Environmental Coalition
Citizens for Local Power
Clean Air Coalition of Western New York
Environment New York

Environmental Advocates of New York
Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc.
National Wildlife Federation
Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships
(NEEP)
NYPIRG
Pace Energy and Climate Center
Renewable Energy Long Island
Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at
Columbia Law School
Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter
Union of Concerned Scientists

cc: Hon. Brian Kolb, Assembly Minority Leader
Hon. Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Senate Democratic Conference Leader
Hon. Jeffrey Klein, Independent Democratic Conference Leader