



**ENVIRONMENTAL
ADVOCATES OF NEW YORK**

2019 Action Agenda

The threats to human health and the environment have never been greater and in 2019 we have no time to waste. Far too many national politicians have abdicated their duty to protect the environment, conserve natural resources, and safeguard human health leaving it to the states to step up and act. New York must reclaim its leadership stature on environmental issues for the benefit of current and future generations and the natural systems upon which all life depends.

The policies of 2019 must set a new standard for environmental protection. Elected officials must lay the foundation so that New York is recognized as an international green leader by setting the course to achieve significant pollution reductions by mid-century. Achieving this will mean transitioning to a decarbonized economy powered by 100% renewable energy while also ensuring our infrastructure and communities are strong and resilient in the face of a dramatically changing climate. In addition, green leadership means enshrining every New Yorker's right to clean water, clean air, and healthful communities and ensuring toxic chemicals that have permeated all aspects of our lives are either banned or strictly regulated.

New York is positioned to lead and to do so the Legislature must:

- ✓ Enact the Climate and Community Protection Act;
- ✓ Secure at least a \$1 billion annual commitment for clean water infrastructure;
- ✓ Pass congestion pricing to fix and modernize mass transit; and,
- ✓ Amend the State Constitution's Bill of Rights to secure a right to clean air and water and a healthful environment.

Climate Security for All

The latest international and national climate assessments are clear that the current rate of carbon emissions is leading to a devastating trajectory of rising global temperatures if swift action is not taken. In order to help stabilize a likely global temperature increase of 1.5°C, we have approximately 12 years to reduce carbon emissions by 45% below 2010 levels and reach net zero emissions by 2050. New York is already experiencing the severe impacts of rising global temperatures in the increased frequency of extreme weather events, flooding, prolonged heat waves, and periods of drought.

Therefore, the New York Legislature must pass the Climate and Community Protection Act that establishes aggressive mandates for ramping up the use of clean, renewable energy, and reducing climate pollution that harms our public health, environment, and economy. The bill not only codifies New York's strong climate and clean energy goals – it also sets clear and accountable mandates for doing so equitably across all sectors of the economy, prioritizing climate and environmental justice and the creation of good, sustainable jobs across the state.

Clean Drinking Water for All

Every New Yorker relies on functional infrastructure for clean and healthy water. That system is failing: water mains are corroded and our water treatment plants are outdated, threatening our most precious resource. With an estimated \$80 billion in investment needed over the next twenty

years, the state must provide communities the funding to fix water infrastructure and ensure that when New Yorkers turn on their faucets the water is safe to drink.

Source water protection is essential to prevent pollution from entering our lakes, rivers and drinking water. Moreover, to ensure that any contamination of our water sources does not go unnoticed, the state must also move forward to set limits on “emerging contaminants” and establish mandatory water testing. New Yorkers have the right to know what’s in their water, especially when there are chemicals present that could pose serious health risks.

Clean Transportation for All

Tailpipe pollution makes people sick and can lead to premature death. New York’s transportation sector is also the biggest source of its climate pollution. We must set policies to reduce the sheer number of vehicles on our roads and dramatically scale up mass transit and other non-polluting transit options. Government at all levels should develop robust transit networks and support communities in securing the funds needed to address their transit needs. Policies should encourage non-fossil fuel government (including school buses) and commercial vehicle fleets and infrastructure for non-fossil fuel vehicles, including mandates requiring the transition to an all electric public transit and government fleet by 2040.

Clean and Vibrant Communities for All

We support policies to promote clean and vibrant communities by, among other things, eliminating human and wildlife exposure to a host of toxic chemicals (including pesticides) that find their way into our homes, workplaces, drinking water and food supply. Many of these chemicals are linked to widespread illness, including cancer. Policies must be set to eliminate the use of harmful pesticides in farming and commercial practices that make their way into the environment and our communities. It is also time to finally eliminate toxic chemicals, such as flame retardants, used in products designed for children.

New waste reduction measures also must be adopted as communities see the cost and impacts of solid waste escalate. State action is urgently needed to ban plastic bags, reduce the use of all disposable bags and to establish Extended Producer Responsibility requirements making corporations and not consumers responsible for product and package reuse and recycling.

Investments for a Healthy New York

Lastly, it is critical State investments to existing programs remain robust. Governor Cuomo and legislators have few responsibilities that impact our lives more than the New York State Budget. The SFY 2019-20 Enacted Budget should:

- Finance the state superfund program (\$100M) and the Environmental Protection Fund (at least \$300M) and protect the funds from diversion to non-environmental projects;
- Include congestion pricing to fix and modernize mass transit;
- Increase funding to support electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, EV purchase rebates, and grants for local governments to convert their entire fleets to EVs;
- Increase funding for water service line replacement to holistically eliminate exposure to toxics such as lead in drinking water; and
- Provide more funds to increase staff of environmental and health agencies and also ensure adequate resources for them to do their jobs.