



BUILDING
DECARBONIZATION
COALITION



SIERRA CLUB
ATLANTIC CHAPTER



The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

March 31, 2023

Dear Governor Hochul,

Upgrade NY is a collaboration of unions, climate justice advocates, building industry representatives and environmental groups calling for New York to decarbonize State-owned buildings, facilities and campuses through a local, union-led workforce. As New York finalizes the 2023-24 budget, we urge you to support good jobs, clean air, and climate justice through union-led building decarbonization.

Under your leadership, New York has already seen major progress on implementing the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, including in 2022 alone the passage and signing of the Utility Thermal Energy Networks and Jobs Act, legislation adopting updated building and appliance energy efficiency standards, and Executive Order No. 22, directing State Agencies to Adopt a Sustainability and Decarbonization Program.

To build on that success, and the nation-leading Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA), **we urge you to take the next steps forward and commit in this budget to fully decarbonize New York's state--owned buildings, campuses and facilities by 2040 and take immediate action to approve at least \$115 million in funding this session to ensure that 15 of the highest emitting campuses can begin to move forward with Thermal Energy Network shovel-ready projects by 2025.**

The Executive budget, Senate one-house, and Assembly one-house all included forward-looking climate action and commitments. We are especially encouraged by the leadership from both the Assembly and Senate in recognizing that climate progress goes hand-in-hand with policies that create union careers, which bring underserved communities into the middle-class and provide a glidepath for New York's transitioning workforce.

The legislature in their one-houses have committed to delivering immediate results to create this necessary glidepath for our workforce by authorizing \$115 million to ensure that projects to eliminate on-site emissions from 15 of the highest-emitting state-owned campuses move forward with shovel-ready Thermal Energy Networks by 2025. To move these 15 projects forward this year the Assembly and Senate one-house budgets included:

- \$75 million, which includes \$5 million each for 15 of the highest emitting state-owned campuses and facilities to begin detailed engineering designs to get to shovel ready by 2025 to fully decarbonize by building thermal energy networks.
- \$9.5 million funding for 15 state-owned campuses and facilities to prepare for thermal energy networks, including weatherization
- \$30 million to fund work on decarbonization projects in State-owned campuses and facilities that are already shovel ready, such as chillers for zero-emission air conditioning for the University of Albany.
- Workforce funding or pre-apprenticeship programs and wrap-around services to support residents of disadvantaged communities (DACs) to join the union workforce.
- Labor standards such as prevailing wage and project labor agreements.
- Local hiring requirements, with at least 40% of overall investments and benefits from this work should go to residents of DACs, which would include jobs, recruitment into unions' direct entry programs, pre-apprenticeship program grants, stipends and wrap-around services.

With your support, New York has an opportunity to lead by example and upgrade State-owned buildings and facilities to eliminate on-site pollution with thermal energy networks built by a local, union-led workforce.

We look forward to working with you over the next week to advance this critical climate and just transition policy.

Sincerely,

Lisa Dix, New York Director, Building Decarbonization Coalition

Gary LaBarbera, President, New York State Building and Construction Trades Council

Mario Cilento, President, New York State AFL-CIO

Julie Tighe, Executive Director, New York League of Conservation Voters

Sonal Jessel, Director of Policy, WE ACT for Environmental Justice

Roger Downs, Conservation Director, Sierra Club, Atlantic Chapter

Jessica Azulay, Executive Director, Alliance for a Green Economy

Lucas Shapiro, Interim Executive Director, ALIGN: The Alliance for a Greater New York