

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday, August 8
Contact: Eli Judge, ejudge@groupgordon.com, 608-332-3940
Web: @NYRenews | www.nyrenews.org

REPORT: New Report Shows Major State Agencies Violate NY Climate Act

Top-funded agencies, including the Departments of Health, Education, Transportation, and Empire State Development, fail to uphold law's climate and equity mandates

Report offers immediate and concrete policy recommendations to the Governor, the Comptroller, and State agencies to meet the demands of the Climate Act

READ THE REPORT: [English](#) | [Spanish](#)

New York State – Today, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI) and the NY Renews Coalition released “Flouting the Law: Major State Agencies Are Ignoring New York’s Climate Mandates.” [link to report] The report details how, on the fifth anniversary of the passage of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (Climate Act), almost every state agency is in violation of the clear climate and equity mandates of the law, including four of the state’s best-funded agencies—the Departments of Health, Transportation, Education, and Development (Empire State Development).

The report reveals that large state agencies with a combined funding appropriations of over \$279 billion have made over 26,000 decisions without adequately analyzing whether and how those decisions will impact greenhouse gas emissions, pollution, and local disadvantaged communities across the state. Agencies have also spent nearly \$2 billion on clean energy spending without ensuring that at least 35 to 40% of benefits reach disadvantaged communities, another requirement of the Climate Act.

The report also highlights a lack of climate action at large and well-funded state agencies.

While areas of government such as transportation, health care and education are often overlooked as drivers of environmental progress, these agencies have immense resources, regulate sectors responsible for substantial portions of New York's emissions, and must play a pivotal role in reducing emissions and redressing our state's legacies of environmental discrimination.

These findings come on the heels of reports that New York is currently [three to five years behind](#) on achieving its renewable energy targets, and as fossil fuel business interests have begun a lobbying campaign to weaken the state's climate mandates.

The report offers immediate and concrete policy recommendations that the Governor, the Comptroller, and State agencies can take to rise to the challenge and promise of a renewable economy, fully meet the demands of the Climate Act, and ensure a more just and sustainable future for all New Yorkers.

"Flouting the Law" is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

"It's been five years since we passed landmark climate legislation in New York—and it's unacceptable that, as our communities face ever-worsening heatwaves, storms, and health-impacting pollution, our state's leading agencies have failed to uphold the Climate Law," said **Stephan Edel, NY Renews Executive Director**. "This points to a massive failure in leadership on the part of the Governor's administration and state agency heads, as well as a lack of coordination between agencies and the executive office. New York State should be leading on climate justice implementation nationally; instead, leadership is botching the job at the expense of our communities' health, safety, and lives."

"Recent suggestions that New York's emissions reduction deadlines will be missed, and indeed, may be lowered, are premature given that state agencies across the board are seemingly entirely foregoing any attempts to comply with the Climate Act," said **Caroline Chen, Director of the Environmental Justice Program at the New York Lawyers for the Public Interest**. "This report should be a wake-up call that more must be done to fight for our climate, in particular for environmental justice communities who have borne and continue to suffer disproportionate burdens from pollution. Governor Hochul should seize this moment to take concrete, immediate action and make New York a true leader in fighting climate change and protecting our most vulnerable communities."

"The Climate Act was a long time coming for environmental justice communities who continue to need clean air and water. Five years after its passing, this report finds that some of the largest funded agencies are not just failing to implement the Climate Act, but are also actively undermining it. The evidence piles on suggesting that the State is poised to miss many climate deadlines not because the goals are unattainable, but because of the lack of climate leadership and will," said **Eddie Bautista, Executive Director at the NYC Environmental Justice Alliance**.

"On the fifth anniversary of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, this report reveals the devastating reality that major state agencies, with budgets over \$279 billion, have ignored climate and equity mandates, making over 26,000 decisions without assessing their impact on emissions and disadvantaged communities that the state is mandated to safeguard. This neglect perpetuates environmental injustice," said **Rami Dinnawi, Environmental Justice**

Campaign & Policy Manager at El Puente. “Despite modest clean energy investments, the failure to ensure that 35 to 40% of benefits reach disadvantaged communities is unacceptable. Key agencies like Health, Transportation, Education, and Empire State Development must lead in reducing emissions and addressing environmental discrimination. New York is behind on renewable energy targets, and fossil fuel interests are pushing to weaken climate mandates. Governor Hochul and leaders of State Agencies must prioritize climate justice and adopt our policy recommendations to fulfill the Climate Act's promise and secure a just, sustainable future for all New Yorkers.”

“New York State's failure to invest adequately in its climate legislation not only jeopardizes our environmental future but also undermines the progress we've made towards sustainable and resilient communities. It's crucial that we prioritize funding and resources to ensure the success of our climate initiatives and protect the well-being of all New Yorkers. We cannot pride ourselves in passing the Climate Law alone, we must ensure it is implemented and we are already falling behind,” said **Dariella Rodriguez, Director of Community Development** at The Point CDC.

“The findings of this report highlight a profound failure in leadership and a disturbing neglect of our climate mandates. New York State's leading agencies, entrusted with the responsibility and resources to drive environmental progress, have fallen short. This inaction disproportionately impacts our most vulnerable communities, who are already suffering the brunt of environmental injustice,” declares **Elizabeth Yeampierre, Executive Director of UPROSE.** “It is imperative that the Governor and state agency heads take immediate and decisive action to enforce the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. Our frontline communities cannot wait any longer. The time for empty promises is over; we need real, tangible change to safeguard our future and ensure a just, sustainable New York for all.”

“This report is deeply disturbing because it clearly documents that state agencies in New York are not working in a coordinated fashion or in some cases not working at all to implement our state's climate law,” said **Bob Cohen, Policy and Research Director of Citizen Action of New York.** “The ultimate responsibility lies with the Governor, who, as the state's chief executive, is responsible for making sure that agencies enforce the law. We can see the consequences of agency inaction by looking out our windows and watching TV this week, as Tropical Storm Debby wreaks havoc, impacting millions of Americans. The Governor must force her agencies to change course, or New Yorkers will face ever more serious consequences each year of this inaction.”

“In the face of the worsening climate crisis, New Yorkers deserve and demand that state agencies uphold our Climate Law and act in the best interest of our health, safety, and security. In the case of the Route 17 expansion project, should NYSDOT advance its current proposal—one that almost entirely impacts disadvantaged communities—the agency will be hampering New York's efforts to achieve climate justice, while further harming vulnerable towns and cities,” said **Taylor Jaffe, Environmental Justice Coordinator of Catskill Mountainkeeper.** “Catskill Mountainkeeper supports the thoughtful recommendations that

emerge from this report and encourages NYSDOT and every state agency 'to make the needed course corrections now.'"

"Our Nation has centuries of experience with broken promises," said **Chief Roger Hill of the Tonawanda Seneca Nation**. "Though this is not our law, it is supposed to protect communities like ours, but we've seen firsthand how the state helps developers push through polluting projects like Edwards Vacuum without following the law. Our people will bear the brunt of this pollution because New York is not adhering to its own laws."

"New York's climate mandates are starting to look like empty promises. This alarming report shows that Governor Hochul and state agencies continue to put our communities at risk of the climate crisis. Just this past week, we saw tropical storms, heat waves, and air quality warnings affect New Yorkers across the state, especially Black and brown frontline communities. We urge state agencies to prioritize projects to ensure buildings transition to clean energy so we can create healthier neighborhoods and a pipeline for green, union jobs. This includes making sure that public schools and housing are sustainable and safe havens for New Yorkers. We need fewer delays and more meaningful climate action now," said **Theodore A. Moore, Executive Director of ALIGN**.

"Just as we learned that New York is set to fall short of our bold and necessary climate goals, we see why: there has been an utter failure of leadership by our state's top agencies and the Governor to adequately address the climate crisis," said **Daniel Atonna, Political Coordinator at For the Many**. "Whether it's orange skies darkening with wildfire smoke or disastrous flooding, New Yorkers are paying the price for the fossil fuel industry's greed while state leaders let it happen. This alarming report indicates that, until Governor Hochul's administration makes a concerted effort to comply with the Climate Act, working-class communities will continue to bear the brunt of this catastrophe. The Governor must take action immediately to ensure New Yorkers are protected from the worst impacts of the climate crisis."

###

NY Renews is a coalition of more than 340 environmental justice, community, faith, labor, and multi-issue organizations fighting for just climate policy for New Yorkers. We are the force behind the nation's most aggressive climate law, the NY State Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, enacted in 2019. The Climate, Jobs & Justice Package is the next step in our fight for climate justice in New York.

New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI) combines the power of law, organizing, and the private bar to make lasting change where it's needed most. Our Environmental Justice Program has worked to eliminate the disproportionate and unfair burden of environmental hazards distributed to disadvantaged and other environmental justice communities, and to create a more equitable, sustainable, and climate resilient New York.