



Media Release

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Climate Groups Give Hochul a D- on Addressing the Climate Crisis

Urge Governor Hochul to take immediate action to ensure legal mandates are met

Climate Can't Wait, a collaborative of dozens of climate groups, released a report card today grading Governor Kathy Hochul on addressing the climate crisis, including implementation of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) which was signed into law July, 2019, five years ago. The report, "Governor Kathy Hochul 2024 Climate Report Card," graded the Governor on her actions and inactions as to 13 policy implementation and legislative proposals. The Governor's overall grade was a D-.

In her remarks at a climate summit at the Vatican last May, Governor Hochul said "Climate change is a global crisis that demands a response from all fronts, and New York continues to lead through our climate initiatives."

"Hochul claims to be a climate leader, but today, our report card clearly demonstrates that she is failing the people of New York on addressing the climate crisis and ensuring a just transition to renewable energy. The Governor has vetoed and stalled legislation and allowed her agencies to ignore statutory mandates of our climate law. She has stated that the CLCPA mandates should be relaxed and even dialed back," **said Ruth Foster of Climate Can't Wait.**

New York's climate law, The Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) requires an 85% reduction in climate-destroying greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (and zero net emissions) by 2050, with a 40% reduction by 2030. The CLCPA also mandates that 70% of electricity must come from renewable energy sources by 2030, and 100% must be zero emissions by 2040. Among the extreme shortfalls in the Governor's performance that are highlighted in the report card are:

- making adequate progress in meeting the CLCPA greenhouse gas emissions and renewable energy targets;
- ensuring that state agencies under her control follow mandates in the CLCPA that their decisions and other actions are not inconsistent with the CLCPA emissions targets (the "climate screen") and do not "disproportionately burden" disadvantaged communities (the "equity" screen);
- generating adequate funding for the state's transition to renewables;
- implementing the state's congestion pricing law; and
- refusing to advance and refusing so far to sign the Climate Change Superfund Act.

A number of recent reports have shown that the Governor is woefully remiss in meeting the state's climate goals. A June 2024 report by the Department of Public Service (DPS) and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) found that the 70%

renewable energy target for electricity will likely not be achieved. In July, an audit by the State Comptroller found that the Public Service Commission did not adequately plan, monitor, and assess the risks and challenges to meet the CLCPA renewable electricity targets. A New York Lawyers for the Public Interest report documented that four major state agencies, the Departments of Education, Health, Transportation and the ESD, made more than 25,000 decisions without using the law's climate and equity screens. And a recent state report said that, as of 2021, emissions had then been only reduced by 9%. Moreover, the primary method that the Governor has chosen to achieve the GHG mandates – the establishment of a cap-and-invest system – is long delayed, even though the CLCPA that required GHG emissions regulations to be in place by January 1, 2024.

“The Governor’s failure to even propose regulations so far to establish a cap-and-invest system for climate – almost ten months after the legal deadline – will likely inhibit our state’s ability to meet the CLCPA emissions targets. This delay leaves a gaping hole in raising the billions of dollars annually her own administration has repeatedly said is necessary to move off fossil fuels and towards a renewable energy economy in our state,” said **Bob Cohen, Policy and Research Director of Citizen Action of New York**. “Hochul has also fallen way short by failing to propose, and in some cases actively resisting proposals to tax wealthy individuals and large corporations to fund climate and other urgent needs of New Yorkers.”

The report card also sets out a number of actions the Governor can undertake to improve her climate grade in the future, including signing several climate bills currently on her desk, including significant climate funding and revenue measures in her 2025-26 budget, and moving forth on her stalled cap-and-invest program, while ensuring it protects environmental justice communities.

“The Hochul administration has failed to grasp that we are in a climate emergency. For more than a year, global temperatures have exceeded the target cap of a 1.5 degree C increase. Extreme weather is accelerating, with heat waves, smoke-filled skies, and flooding increasingly common throughout New York and the planet. When the UN Secretary-General complains that slow action by governments has opened up the Gates of Hell, unfortunately he is referring to Governor Hochul. He further noted that the battle to limit temperature rise to 1.5 degrees will be won or lost in the 2020s. Rather than continuing to slow walk climate action, Hochul needs to speed it up, saying no to fossil fuels and yes to Making Polluters Pay,” said **Mark Dunlea of PAUSE (People of Albany United for Safe Energy), the 350.org affiliate in the Capital District**.

“We are alarmed by Governor Hochul’s public statement last July that the state needs to adopt slower timelines for climate action. The Governor clearly doesn’t understand that we are in a climate crisis. She doesn’t understand what climate leadership is. She needs to tell her state agencies to comply with the climate law, said **Merton Simpson, County Legislature and Co-Chair of the Sheridan Hollow Alliance for Renewable Energy**. “We are also concerned about the lack of commitment to transition the Capitol and Empire State Plaza, the home of New York’s state government to renewable energy and close the Sheridan Avenue Steam Plant that heats and cools the Capitol and Plaza. The Steam Plant has polluted my neighborhood for over 100 years.”

“Governor Hochul repeatedly points to her concerns with “affordability,” but right now she is ignoring a bill that sits on her desk that would address that,” said **Sara Gronim, co-leader of 350Brooklyn**. “The Climate Superfund Act, would bill the very worst climate pollution emitters–fossil fuel companies that currently rake in billions in profits every year–\$3B a year to help repair damage to public infrastructure by extreme weather and to help make public infrastructure more resilient in the face of the accelerating climate crisis. Right now it’s New York

taxpayers who pick up the tab when a local bridge washes out in a storm or a local school needs a better ventilation system to protect children from wildfire smoke.”

“New York State has had myriad opportunities to be a global leader on innovative climate solutions, but the Governor has repeatedly failed to seize the moment,” **said Jeanne Bergman, Director of Thermal Energy Networks at Sane Energy Project.** “For example, thermal energy networks are the fastest way to get off dirty gas and to deliver healthy, affordable, and renewable heating and cooling for homes and businesses at neighborhood scale, while creating good union jobs. Although Hochul formally signed several bills to develop thermal energy projects, the timelines are ridiculously long and some only require planning, not implementation. This Governor just won’t allow our state to move forward into the future we need.”

"This summer brought one climate disaster after another, from deadly heat to destructive storms, providing New Yorkers a painful taste of life on a burning planet. Unfortunately, Hochul's commitment to meeting our climate goals is treacherously faltering, including gutting congestion pricing, derailing a deal on the NY HEAT Act, and embracing false solutions. It's time for Hochul to deliver on the climate leadership that she's promised, because New York – and the nation – desperately need it," **said Eric Weltman, senior organizer with Food & Water Watch.**