



BUILDING  
DECARBONIZATION  
COALITION



SIERRA CLUB  
ATLANTIC CHAPTER



February 14, 2023

Dear Legislator,

New York has already seen major progress on achieving the ambitious climate goals set in the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA), including most recently the passage of the Utility Thermal Energy Networks and Jobs Act and [Executive Order No. 22](#), Directing State Agencies to Adopt a Sustainability and Decarbonization Program. To build on that success, New York must continue to lead by example by decarbonizing our State-owned campuses and facilities.

[Upgrade NY](#) is a collaboration of unions, climate justice advocates, building industry representatives and environmental groups calling for New York to decarbonize State-owned campuses and facilities through a local, union-led workforce. We urge you to support good jobs, clean air, and climate justice through union-led building decarbonization.

The climate proposals in the Executive budget included authorization for the New York Power Authority to finance, build, own, operate and maintain renewable energy projects; a requirement for new construction to be built without on-site greenhouse gas emissions; and a cap and invest program to provide long-term funding. These programs must include standards such as prevailing wage, project labor agreements, local hiring requirements, labor harmony, Buy American and a commitment to build the workforce necessary for success.

We appreciate the focus on building decarbonization and that the State is working to make long-term commitments and identify appropriate funding streams to implement the CLCPA. We look forward to working with the Legislature and Administration to help ensure the success of long-term funding, but any robust, new funding mechanisms are still years away from being able to support actual projects and create climate jobs.

**Our state campuses and facilities proposal bridges this gap.** NY must commit to long term goals, while also funding projects with labor standards and supporting workforce development, immediately.

This work must begin now. We urge the Assembly and the Senate to include in their one house budget bills a mandate to create a long term program to fully decarbonize and achieve zero onsite emissions for [New York State-owned campuses and facilities](#) by 2040 and a specific requirement that 15 of the highest-emitting campuses and facilities in the state portfolio begin the work necessary to ensure shovel ready projects by

2025. Many of these campuses and facilities are great candidates for thermal energy networks, which can provide cost-effective, reliable heating and cooling at a neighborhood scale with clean, efficient thermal energy.

**We urge specific shovel-ready project investments of \$115 million, coupled with robust labor standards and local hiring benefits and investments in the 2023-24 budget including:**

- \$75 million, which includes \$5 million each for 15 campuses and facilities to choose the best option for decarbonization, such as thermal energy networks, that is at scale and most technically appropriate for the site and to begin detailed engineering designs to get to shovel ready
- \$9.5 million funding to prepare for electrification, 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.
- Workforce funding from NYSERDA workforce development budget for pre-apprenticeship programs and wrap-around services to support residents of disadvantaged communities (DACs) who want to join the union workforce.
- Labor standards such as prevailing wage, project labor agreements, local hiring requirements, labor harmony, and Buy American shall be required.
- Local hiring requirements shall be required and 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.

This commitment and year one funding is absolutely necessary to build short and long-term certainty and a union jobs pipeline for the clean energy workforce from now until 2040. By funding the work to make projects shovel-ready by 2025, and utilizing project labor agreements, you will be sending a signal that the highly trained and competent workforces represented by unions across New York will be included as part of our state's climate agenda. It is essential that labor unions and the tens of thousands of workers they represent be part of the decarbonization movement.

Further, the CLCPA requires that residents of New York's communities most overburdened by the impacts of climate pollution receive a minimum of 40 percent of overall investments and benefits from state climate programs and funding. We urge that local hiring requirements be part of this policy and 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.

We look forward to working with you to Upgrade NY.

Sincerely,

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