



462 36th Street 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Brooklyn, NY 11232 NYC-EJA.org

On the ground – and at the table

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 21, 2020

### Contact:

Michael O'Loughlin

[oloughlin.michael@gmail.com](mailto:oloughlin.michael@gmail.com) / 917.957.9160

Eddie Bautista

[eddie@nyc-eja.org](mailto:eddie@nyc-eja.org) / 347.841.4410

## **New Report Highlights Climate Justice Strategies to Recover from COVID-19 Crisis and Prepare for Future Climate and Health Emergencies**

### **Recommendations Center NYC's Disproportionately-Impacted Low-Income Neighborhoods and Communities of Color**

**New York, NY** – A new report from the [New York City Environmental Justice Alliance \(NYC-EJA\)](#) highlights strategies to help NYC recover from the current COVID-19 crisis while tackling historic environmental injustices and preparing for future climate events and public health emergencies. New York's low-income communities of color have been hit hardest by the health and socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis and are on the frontlines of the climate crisis.

[NYC Climate Justice Agenda 2020: A Critical Decade for Climate, Equity, and Health](#) shows how the COVID-19 crisis both mirrors and foreshadows future risks exacerbated by climate change wherein low-income communities, communities of color and other marginalized groups are hit first and worst by the impacts. The report recommends accelerated strategies for a Just Transition, including specific timelines and concrete financial and legislative commitments to create healthy and resilient neighborhoods; tackle emissions in an equitable way; support climate adaptation for frontline communities; and generate good, green jobs in the process.

“The 50th Anniversary of Earth Day coinciding with the COVID-19 crisis is a reminder to all New Yorkers of the importance of community resiliency and planning,” said **Eddie Bautista, Executive Director, New York City Environmental Justice Alliance**. “The disparate vulnerability of communities of color to both climate change impacts and pandemics is a public health imperative we must address. We cannot quarantine climate change - it's a curve we continue to refuse to flatten. Time is literally running out to take action.”

Released on the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, [\*NYC Climate Justice Agenda 2020: A Critical Decade for Climate, Equity, and Health\*](#), arrives at a pivotal moment. As New York plans how to recover from the COVID-19 crisis, we also have only 10 years to reduce GHG emissions by 40%, as mandated by the state's newly adopted Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, and to reach sustainability goals set out in the original PlaNYC 2030. New York City is also on the cusp of the 2021 elections, which will result in a new Mayor, as well as the biggest turnover of NYC Council representatives in decades.

[\*NYC Climate Justice Agenda 2020: A Critical Decade for Climate, Equity, and Health\*](#) focuses on three themes and includes dozens of specific recommendations:

- **Reduce Greenhouse Gases and Localized Emissions**
  - Prioritize localized renewable energy generation and storage, and reject false solutions and loopholes that delay emission reductions.
  - Transform Rikers Island from a notorious jail into a hub for renewable energy generation and storage.
  - Rigorously implement NYC's new Commercial Waste Zones law; expand recycling and composting in all residences, including NYCHA houses; and take other actions to tackle emissions from waste that are tied to high rates of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases in environmental justice communities.
- **Advance a Just Transition Towards an Inclusive, Regenerative Economy**
  - Create a Climate and Community Development Fund to address energy efficiency in low-income housing while generating good, green jobs.
  - Protect NYC's remaining industrial waterfront & manufacturing zones so vitally necessary for a Just Transition to renewable energy and climate resilience.
- **Cultivate Healthy and Resilient Communities**
  - Prepare for extreme heat by accurately tracking heat mortality data and publicizing cooling center locations before heat emergencies while maintaining social distancing guidelines, and dedicating funds for community preparedness.
  - Reduce fugitive chemicals and hazardous materials release threats in waterfront areas like the Hunts Point Food Distribution Center during severe storm events.
  - Invest in coastal resiliency that prioritizes nature-based solutions to provide environmental justice communities with the co-benefits of green infrastructure.

#### [About the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance \(NYC-EJA\)](#)

Founded in 1991, the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance (NYC-EJA) is a non-profit citywide membership network linking grassroots organizations from low-income communities of color in their struggle for environmental justice. NYC-EJA empowers its member organizations to advocate for improved environmental conditions and against inequitable environmental burdens through the coordination of campaigns designed to inform City and State policies. Through our efforts, member organizations coalesce around specific common issues that threaten the ability for low-income communities of color to thrive.

###