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NYC Environmental Justice Alliance’s Response to the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act Rollbacks

ALBANY, NY - Today, the Legislature will be voting on the Transportation, Economic Development and Environmental Conservation budget bill, the contents of which are unsettling to environmental justice advocates and communities alike. Like we feared, Gov. Hochul has gutted the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (or the “Climate Law”) that our communities have fought so hard for.

We oppose any change to the Climate Law that undermines the commitments to our communities in the law. With this budget, we are letting the State off the hook for acting expeditiously in our communities. This bill draws out timelines, weakens pollutants standards, and robs us of the action we need now, locking in lung-clogging pollution for years to come.

Our communities want cleaner air, healthier children, and schools and subways that don’t flood when it rains heavily. We want investments in our neighborhoods like safer housing and clean energy projects that would lower energy bills, and to hold corporate polluters and our government accountable. These rollbacks to the Climate Law make it that much harder to get the fossil fuel industry’s feet off our necks.

We appreciate the work of our allies in the Legislature who fought against the climate rollbacks. While there was a slight increase to the disadvantaged community investment goal from 35-40% to 40-45%, it is not nearly enough considering how much it will cost our communities to delay our clean energy transition. With the State walking away from our climate commitments, legislators need to zero in on solutions to protect our communities by focusing on replacing aging power plants with clean renewable energy, empowering residents with tools to reduce energy bills, protections from extreme heat, and addressing rising pollution from e-commerce warehouses and data centers.

In the face of these landmark slashes to the well-being of our people, we cannot slow down simply because conditions are challenging and different. With rising temperatures and flooded streets, now is the time to double down for New Yorkers and show what real climate leadership looks like in hard times like these.

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