



OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

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**NYC Council Committee on Environmental Protection
Hearing on Renewable Energy and New York City's Climate Adaptation
10.13.22**

Thank you to Chair Gennaro and members of the Committee on Environmental Protection for taking the time to hold this hearing on Renewable Energy and New York City's climate adaptation.

Building a truly just and sustainable environmental and economic future is one of the greatest challenges we currently face. We are tasked with transitioning away from fossil fuels and committing ourselves to a more equitable and resilient city and state; one that we can proudly hand over to future generations. As Brooklyn Borough President, I care deeply about advancing climate resiliency and environmental justice in the borough, as the climate crisis must be tackled both locally and globally. I am here today to support the resolutions to implement and commit ourselves to the bold climate targets of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA); the NYS Build Public Renewables Act; and the Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act.

The passage of the CLCPA underscores the urgency of the kind of transformative climate action needed to decarbonize New York State's electricity sector, and to create a more just economic environment for all New Yorkers. The importance of protecting New York's most vulnerable communities from the uneven harms of the climate crisis is coupled with our responsibility to direct the benefits of these climate investments back to them.

The CLCPA sets ambitious targets for transitioning away from fossil fuels and eliminating emissions from electricity generation. These targets, such as committing 70% of energy generation to renewable sources by 2030, 100% zero-emission electricity generation by 2040, and reducing our greenhouse gas emissions by at least 85% by 2050, cannot be achieved without aggressive and decisive action. I urge the Climate Action Council to draft, and for the Governor to sign, a final Climate Action Council Scoping Plan so that we can meet and surpass the CLCPA targets. Thank you to Council Member Restler for putting forth this resolution so that we have the opportunity to make it clear that New York City supports the CLCPA.

The benefits shared from the bold investments into renewable energy and climate resiliency are only as effective as they are equitable and accessible. Passing the NYS Build Public Renewables Act will ensure that we are assertively investing in state-owned and -supplied renewable energy while rightfully prioritizing low- to moderate-income residents. The creation of good, union jobs

through The Build Public Renewables Act will enhance a localized, strong workforce. Fair and equitable labor standards go hand-in-hand with developing a more just and sustainable environment, which is why I support the passage of the NYS Build Public Renewables Act and urge the Council to do so as well.

The approaching 10th anniversary of Hurricane Sandy serves as a reminder that the resilience of our infrastructure must always be top priority. Many neighborhoods still have not fully recovered from the damages of the storm. We owe it to our constituents to pay that debt forward, and to make major investments in the resiliency of our energy grid and into the strength of our local communities. That is why I support the Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act and also encourage the Council to send a message to the public that they should vote yes on November 8.

Another important step our State colleagues can take to ensure a green energy future is to support electrification of New York's building stock. Over three-quarters of New York State's residential buildings are still heated by oil and gas. Governor Hochul has rightfully called for the electrification of 1 million homes by 2030. But, at the current rate of electrifying only twenty thousand homes per year, we are woefully behind schedule. The "All-Electric Buildings Act" (S6843C), introduced by Assemblymember Emily Gallagher and Senator Brian Kavanaugh, would ban gas hookups and prohibit fossil fuel combustion in new construction across NYS. This bill is complimentary to the decisive action put forth in the NYS Build Public Renewables Act and the CLCPA to break away from fossil fuels, expand access to and production of renewable energies, and strengthen New York's climate resiliency in the face of this crisis.

Access to renewable energy must not come from some far away source, we must localize it and develop it here in our own backyard. I thank Council Member Brannan for introducing Intro 315 to require the Department of Environmental Protection to identify all vacant and underutilized sites for the new purpose of developing renewable energy generation. A resilient energy system is a localized energy system, and we have a responsibility to turn underutilized City-owned spaces not suitable for development of affordable housing into much needed support for our energy grid.

As evidence shows, we have but a small window to make impactful and lasting change for future generations. The CLCPA and NYS Build Public Renewables Act provide powerful tools for transformative change. We must act decisively, with the haste that our crisis demands.

Thank you again for holding this hearing, and for allowing me to speak today. I hope that we will commit ourselves to the values and goals of the CLCPA and create a more just, sustainable future.