March 5, 2020

Honorable Andrew Cuomo  
Governor  
Executive Chamber  
Capitol  
Albany, NY 12234

Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins  
Temporary President and Majority Leader  
State Senate  
LOB, Room 907  
Albany, NY 12247

Honorable Carl Heastie  
Speaker  
State Assembly  
LOB, Room 932  
Albany, NY 12248

Honorable John Flanagan  
Minority Leader  
State Senate  
LOB, Room 909  
Albany, NY 12247

Honorable William Barclay  
Minority Leader  
State Assembly  
LOB, Room 933  
Albany, NY 12248

Re:  Ensure that oil, coal and gas industries cover the costs of the “Restore Mother Nature” Environmental Bond Act

Dear Messrs. Cuomo, Heastie, Flanagan, Barclay and Ms. Stewart-Cousins:

We, the undersigned organizations, write to express our strong support for the proposed “Restore Mother Nature” Bond Act and urge for it to be funded by the polluters responsible for the climate crisis. Governor Cuomo proposed the $3 billion Restore Mother Nature Bond Act in order to enable New York State to both fight the climate crisis and protect New Yorkers from its consequences.

We agree that a bond act of at least $3 billion will be needed, as the governor recently stated, to “fund critical environmental restoration projects in every corner of the state to ensure New York is able to withstand the threat of more intense and frequent storms fueled by climate change.”

There is no question that environmental needs in New York are astronomical, and now that the state has adopted one of the strongest climate laws in the country, funding to ensure the state meets those goals is critical. Additionally, New York has suffered from more frequent severe weather events, flooding, strained water infrastructure, and more at the expense of climate change.

While bond acts are typically paid back by citizens, that does not have to be the case. Revenues from responsible parties can offset that burden. We believe that this bond act is an example of why New Yorkers should not be bearing the financial costs.

Since the 1970s, the fossil fuel industry has known the environmental risks associated with the combustion of fossil fuels and accurately predicted the timetable in which those changes would occur. Avoiding responsibility, the industry used its considerable clout to lie about the evidence to the public, undermine climate science, and hire consultants and lobbyists to derail pro-health and environmental reforms.

New York has a strong history holding polluters accountable for the pollution they created, namely through the 1986 Environmental Bond Act, which combined with the state’s Superfund program, helped put
polluters on the hook for the costs of toxic waste cleanups. This formulation was so successful that the 1986 Bond Act was overwhelmingly approved by voters. The same principle should apply to a 2020 Bond Act.

There is broad support amongst the public for the “polluter pays” principle. Recent national polling conducted by the Center for Climate Integrity found that 70% percent of Americans support the concept of holding climate polluters financially responsible for efforts to fight climate change, with the number jumping to 82% after respondents were informed of the decades of deception perpetuated by the fossil fuel industry.

There are a number of ways that the fossil fuel industry could be held accountable to pay back the Restore Mother Nature Bond Act, including ending fossil fuel subsidies and more. Ending fossil fuel subsidies alone could save New York hundreds of millions of dollars annually (see S.2649-B/A.257-B).

We strongly support a comprehensive, environmental bond act in New York that makes polluters pay, rather than taxpayers, and look forward to working with you on this issue. We appreciate your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Wilson
Board Member
Adirondack Wildlife Refuge

Justin Green
Executive Director
Big Reuse

Adam Flint
Director of Clean Energy Programs
Binghamton Regional Sustainability Coalition

Mary Smith
Communications Director
Church Women United in New York State

Jessica Clegg
Coordinator
Citizens for Local Power

Joe Levine
Director
Citizens For Water

Charlotte Koons
L.I. Coordinator
CODEPINK LONG ISLAND

Stuart Anderson
Community Organizer
Concerned Citizens of Otego

Michel Lee
Chairman
Council on Intelligent Energy & Conservation Policy (CIECP)

B. Arrindell
Director
Damascus Citizens For Sustainability

John Oppermann
Executive Director
Earth Day Initiative

Dylan Gauthier
Director
Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts Project Space
Charley Bowman  
Chair  
**Environmental Justice Task Force of the WNY Peace Center**

Yvonne Taylor  
Vice President  
**Gas Free Seneca**

Patti Wood  
Executive Director  
**Grassroots Environmental Education**

Mark Dunlea  
Chair  
**Green Education and Legal Fund**

Bob DiBenedetto  
President/Executive Director  
**HealthyPlanet**

Margaret Innerhofer  
Director  
**Hudson Valley Concerned Citizens**

Tawn Feeney  
Coordinator  
**Little Lakes Sustainability Network**

Otto Butz  
Founder  
**Milford Doers/Residents of Crumhorn Mtn**

Johanna Fallert  
Leader  
**Mothers Out Front-Dutchess County**

Jerry Rivers  
Environmental Scientist  
**North American Climate, Conservation and Environment (NACCE)**

Peggy Maslow  
President  
**North Shore Audubon Society**

Bethany Wallis  
Executive Director  
**Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York (NOFA-NY)**

Buck Moorhead  
Chair  
**NYH2o**

Elizabeth Moran  
Environmental Policy Director  
**NYPIRG**

Mark Apollo  
Director/ Organizer  
**OWS Special Projects Affinity Group**

Tina Lieberman  
Chair  
**People's Climate Movement - Capital Region**

Peter Hudiburg  
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**Plymouth Friends for Clean Water**

Carol Skyrm  
Board Secretary  
**Refugee and Immigrant Fund**

Joseph Campbell  
President  
**Seneca Lake Guardian**

Jack Ramsden  
Core Group  
**ShaleshockCNY**

Nancy Norton  
President  
**Stone Quarry House**
Becky Meier  
Co-Founder  
Stop NY Fracked Gas Pipeline

Suzannah Glidden  
Co-founder  
Stop the Algonquin Pipeline Expansion (SAPE)

Daniel Lipson  
Co-Chair  
SUNY New Paltz Environmental Task Force

Joan Mencher  
Chair  
The Second Chance Fd.

Edith Kantrowitz  
Board Member  
United for Action

Jack Kanack  
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Weather Medic Inc

Nada Khader  
Executive Director  
WESPAC Foundation, Inc.

Lynda Schneekloth  
Coordinator  
WNY Native Plant Collaborative