

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

Charlotte Koons
L.I. Coordinator
CODEPINK LONG ISLAND

Justin Green
Executive Director
Big Reuse

Stuart Anderson
Community Organizer
Concerned Citizens of Otego

Adam Flint
Director of Clean Energy Programs
**Binghamton Regional Sustainability
Coalition**

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

Mary Smith
Communications Director
Church Women United in New York State

B. Arrindell
Director
Damascus Citizens For Sustainability

Jessica Clegg
Coordinator
Citizens for Local Power

John Oppermann
Executive Director
Earth Day Initiative

Joe Levine
Director
Citizens For Water

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
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Mark Apollo
Director/ Organizer
OWS Special Projects Affinity Group

Tina Lieberman
Chair
People's Climate Movement - Capital Region

Peter Hudiburg
Founder
Plymouth Friends for Clean Water

Carol Skyrn
Board Secretary
Refugee and Immigrant Fund

Joseph Campbell
President
Seneca Lake Guardian

Jack Ramsden
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Nancy Norton
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Stop NY Fracked Gas Pipeline

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

Daniel Lipson
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Edith Kantrowitz
Board Member
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Jack Kanack
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Nada Khader
Executive Director
WESPAC Foundation, Inc.

Lynda Schneekloth
Coordinator
WNY Native Plant Collaborative