

December 29, 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 Robert Ort
Minority Leader
State Senate
Capitol, Room 315
Albany, NY 12247

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

Re: Evaluating and Eliminating Certain Fossil Fuel Subsidies in the SFY 2021-22 Budget

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

We, the undersigned organizations, urge you to eliminate certain fossil fuel related tax expenditures in the SFY 2021-22 budget. As the climate emergency, COVID-19 pandemic, and subsequent financial crisis escalate, New York cannot afford to continue subsidizing the fossil fuel industry with hundreds of millions of dollars annually. Reviewing and eliminating fossil fuel subsidies is critical to both addressing our state's budget shortfall and combating the climate crisis.

The COVID-19 pandemic has imposed unprecedented hardship on New York State. Tens of thousands of New Yorkers have died, unemployment has skyrocketed, and mental health issues have compounded. At the same time, New York State faces an unprecedented \$14.5 billion budget deficit. Everyday New Yorkers, who are already suffering so greatly, cannot afford to bear the brunt of our fiscal shortfall.

Instead of cutting essential public services, New York must make polluters pay by cutting subsidies to the oil and gas industry. New York loses hundreds of millions in tax revenue on fossil fuel related tax expenditures every year. These subsidies not only prop up an industry that actively damages New York's environment, but also leave less money for programs that help New Yorkers.

Additionally, the landmark Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act requires New York State to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 and mandates 100% decarbonized power by 2040. Fossil fuel subsidies are antithetical to these ambitious climate goals, and eliminating as many of these subsidies as possible is critical in forging the clean energy economy of the future.

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 influence to undermine climate science and hire consultants and lobbyists to derail pro-health and environmental reforms. Eliminating as many fossil fuel subsidies as possible in the state budget is one simple way to hold polluters accountable.

Ending fossil fuel subsidies alone could save New York hundreds of millions of dollars annually. **As New York faces a steep budget shortfall due to the COVID-19 pandemic, New York can both save money and continue its progress fighting the climate crisis by taking this simple step to end nonessential fossil fuel subsidies in the SFY 2021-22 budget.**

Thank you for your time and consideration of our comments. We look forward to working with you this budget season.

Sincerely,

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