



NYPIRG NEWS RELEASE

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NYPIRG'S INITIAL RESPONSES TO ENVIRONMENT, HIGHER EDUCATION, MASS TRANSIT, VOTING RIGHTS, AND REVENUE PROPOSALS

(Albany, N.Y.) NYPIRG responded to Governor Cuomo's budget plans today, with the caveat that the devil is in the details and budget details matter greatly. The Governor's plan starts the public debate, but leaves many holes for the Legislature to fill.

Revenues: The Administration argues that Wall Street will flee if the Stock Transfer Tax is collected (instead of currently rebated). In the first six months of this fiscal year, New York has "collected" and then rebated \$4.2 billion from Wall Street. The tax can be collected. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the *Wayfair* decision that a tax collection burden can constitutionally be imposed if the out-of-state tax collector avails himself of the substantial privilege of carrying on business in the taxing jurisdiction. Accordingly, out-of-state brokers or dealers in securities may be compelled by New York to collect and remit the STT on transactions executed on the New York Stock Exchange. And the Stock Exchange itself thrives because of many municipal and state services that facilitate its operations. Instead of placing the burden of New York State's economic recovery on average New Yorkers, it is only reasonable for Wall Street to share its record profits.

Environment: The Governor's Budget includes a commitment to include a new \$500 million for the Clean Water Infrastructure Act, continuing the Governor's promise to double the program by \$2.5 billion back in 2019. It has been estimated that over the next 20 years, New York will need to invest at least \$80 billion to repair, replace, and upgrade New York's water infrastructure - this does not include funding needed to combat emerging contaminants or replace lead service lines. The Governor's budget also includes a maintenance of funding for the Environmental Protection Fund at \$300 million. During a press conference, Director of Budget Robert Mujica stated an intent to work with the legislature to explore revisiting an Environmental Bond Act. Details await to be seen regarding policies to generate revenue by holding polluters fiscally accountable for their pollution, be it through ending fossil fuel subsidies or instituting polluter penalties.

Higher education: The Governor's plan hikes public college tuition and reduces state support for struggling community colleges. Instead of making college more expensive, the state should be doing more to support colleges - both public and independent - and expanding the state's financial aid programs.

MTA: The Governor's budget commits \$3 billion to the MTA's capital budget to help fund the state's broader infrastructure plan, but reduces transit operating aid to the MTA by over \$1 billion, from \$6.2 billion in the FY2021 budget to \$5.1 billion in FY2022. Without sufficient funding, the MTA will be forced to either increase fares, cut service, lay off employees, or likely some combination of the three.

Voting reforms: The Governor's plans to improve elections should include measures to enhance early voting, expand absentee (mail in) voting, and to "professionalize" the boards of elections. The devil is in the details on this one and we'll be reviewing the budget bill. The Governor has been silent on the second constitutional amendment before the Legislature to allow new voters to register and vote on Election Day.

