

For Immediate Release:

Tuesday, May 7, 2024

Contacts:

Blair Horner, NYPIRG, 518-727-4506

Anne Rabe, NYPIRG, 518-560-1849

MEDIA RELEASE

**Environmental Justice, Community, Faith, Labor & Youth Organizations
Join with Local Elected Officials to Applaud New York State Senate for
Passing Climate Change Superfund Act**

**Over 400 Groups Call For Approval of Dedicated Fund That Will Not Increase
Energy Prices**

**Groups Commend Senators for Leading the Way to Provide
“Polluter Pay” \$1 Billion a Year to Disadvantaged Communities Hard-Hit by
Floods & Heat Waves; Remove Taxpayer Burden of \$3 Billion a Year under
Climate Superfund Act**

***Groups Call on Assembly Speaker Heastie, with 76 Democratic Sponsors, to be
Environmental Justice Climate Leaders by Passing the Bill this Session***

(Albany, NY) Today, environmental justice, community, faith, labor and youth organizations joined with local elected officials to applaud the New York State Senate for passing the Climate Superfund Act (S.2129B/A.3351B) in their Earth Day package of bills. The groups told Assembly Speaker Heastie that it is long past time for the Assembly, with 76 Assembly co-sponsors, to stand up and be “Environmental Justice Leaders” by joining the Senate in passing the bill before the end of session. The bill would create a dedicated fund of \$3 billion annually for climate crisis costs paid by profiteering Big Oil companies, including \$1 billion for disadvantaged communities (DAC) every year for 25 years.

The legislation will not increase gas prices [according](#) to the NYU School of Law economist and other experts.

[National polling](#) by Data for Progress found a majority of American voters support making oil and gas companies pay a share of climate costs caused by their pollution. Over 100 [local elected officials](#), 240 [civic, environmental, labor, public health, and religious organizations](#), and 180 [organizations representing youth](#) support passage of the Climate Change Superfund Act. The bill is a priority in the BPHA Caucus [Peoples’ Budget](#) and NYRenews [Climate, Jobs & Justice package](#).

Senator Liz Krueger said, "Today the Senate has demonstrated yet again that we have taxpayers' backs. By passing the Climate Change Superfund Act we are making it clear that when it comes to the hundreds of billions of dollars our state will have to spend to repair and prepare for climate change-driven extreme weather, we don't believe New Yorkers should be left holding the bag and paying those costs alone. The companies that made the mess - Big Oil and Gas - should help clean it up. Now it's up to the Assembly and the Governor to decide if they want to continue to burden New Yorkers with these costs."

Blair Horner, Executive Director of NYPIRG said, “New York is facing billions of dollars in climate costs, expenses to be felt by every taxpayer. This innovative legislation ensures that Big

Oil pays its share of the costs from a worsening climate. New York taxpayers now look to the Assembly to help relieve them of at least some staggering costs resulting from sea level rise, worsening storms, more polluted air, and heat waves.”

Stephan Edel, Executive Director of NY Renews, said, “The NY Renews coalition, representing over 380 organizations and hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers statewide, applauds the NY Senate for their leadership in passing the Climate Change Superfund Act. New York communities need the \$3 billion a year the Act would bring in by making the worst corporate polluters pay for the damages they’ve caused to our climate and communities. We look forward to seeing this bill’s passage in the Assembly and being signed into law on the Governor’s desk this June.”

Food & Water Watch Senior New York Organizer Eric Weltman said, “While New Yorkers brace for the rising and costly impacts of climate change, fossil fuel profiteers are reaping record profits. It’s time these Big Oil corporations paid to clean up their mess. The Climate Change Superfund Act would do just that, redistributing polluters’ wealth to aid communities struggling with the devastating effects of the climate crisis. We applaud the Senate for their leadership, and call on the Assembly to stop protecting Big Oil at New Yorkers’ expense — it’s time to pass the Climate Change Superfund Act.”

Ryan Madden, Climate & Energy Campaigns Director of the Long Island Progressive Coalition, said, “With resilience and protection programs from climate impacts estimated at \$75-100 billion on Long Island over the next few decades, the Climate Change Superfund Act is necessary to hold the biggest oil companies accountable for these costs as climate change continues to threaten our infrastructure, coastlines, and livelihoods. By passing the bill today, the NYS Senate has offered a needed lifeline to everyday people and local governments who currently bear these costs alone. Now it’s up to the NYS Assembly and Governor Hochul to make this lifeline a reality.”

Ben Elkind, Lead Organizer of the New York Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC-NY), said, “As a statewide organization of Reform Jews, we applaud the NY Senate for passing the Climate Change Superfund Act. The Superfund Act embodies the Jewish value of “repairing the world” (“tikkun olam”). Reform Jews from 40 congregations across New York have proudly advocated for this legislation. We call on the NY Assembly to pass this critical legislation, so that we can secure a livable New York for generations to come.”

“At a time when too many political leaders have backed away from supporting the policies necessary to prevent runaway climate change, the NY Senate stepped up and demonstrated what courageous, forward-looking leadership looks like,” said **Peter Bardaglio, coordinator of the Tompkins County Climate Protection Initiative**. “It is now incumbent on the General Assembly to follow suit and pass the Climate Change Superfund Act, sending it to Governor Hochul for her signature.”

Merton D. Simpson, Co-Chair, SHARE and Albany County Legislator, District 2 said, “When John D. Rockefeller Sr. died in 1937 his net worth was \$340 Billion. Since Rockeffeller’s death American fossil fuel companies have made trillions in profits. In 2023 alone U.S. oil companies made profits over \$172 Billion. Since the NYS Senate has passed the Climate Change Superfund Act and the Renewable Capitol Act in 2024; it is extremely perplexing why Governor Hochul and Speaker Heastie refuse to support these bills. Using Ockaham’s Razor, aka The Law of Parsimony (the simplest explanation is the most probable); one is hard pressed to conclude that

they are not being unduly influenced by the fossil fuel industry. 2023 saw record \$28 billion climate disasters including:

- 1 winter storm/cold wave event (across the northeast U.S. in early-February).
- 1 wildfire event (firestorm destroying town of Lahaina on Maui Island of Hawaii).
- 1 drought and heat wave event (focused across the central and southern U.S.).
- 4 flooding events (in California, Florida, and across the eastern and northeastern U.S.).
- 2 tornado outbreaks (across the central and eastern U.S.).
- 2 tropical cyclones (Idalia in Florida and Typhoon Mawar in Guam).
- 17 severe weather/hail events (across many parts of the country). You cannot negotiate with Mother Nature.

“By passing the Climate Change Superfund Act the New York Senate has done the right thing for all New Yorkers,” **said Sara Gronim, co-leader of 350Brooklyn.** “Extreme weather caused by the accelerating climate crisis is damaging life, health, and property all over the state. The needs are urgent. We now look to the Assembly to pass the Climate Change Superfund Act as well, and to Governor Hochul to sign it into law.”

Michael Richardson, Co-Facilitator of Third Act Upstate New York, said, “We read in the news most every day that government and big business must massively fast-track climate action on all fronts if there is to be any hope of averting critical tipping points in the climate system. Yet since the release of the Climate Action Council scoping plan two years ago, the State has passed only two major climate bills. This year, not even one climate bill has been passed by the NYS Assembly. This incrementalism in funding and implementing our landmark Climate Act only brings us closer to those catastrophic tipping points. We have all the knowledge and tools to transition the state economy from fossil-fuels to renewables; what is missing is political courage and political will.”

Food & Water Watch Senior New York Organizer Eric Weltman said, “While New Yorkers brace for the rising and costly impacts of climate change, fossil fuel profiteers are reaping record profits. It’s time these Big Oil corporations paid to clean up their mess. The Climate Change Superfund Act would do just that, redistributing polluters’ wealth to aid communities struggling with the devastating effects of the climate crisis. We applaud the Senate for their leadership, and call on the Assembly to stop protecting Big Oil at New Yorkers’ expense — it’s time to pass the Climate Change Superfund Act.”

Ryan Madden, Climate & Energy Campaigns Director of the Long Island Progressive Coalition, said, “With resilience and protection programs from climate impacts estimated at \$75-100 billion on Long Island over the next few decades, the Climate Change Superfund Act is necessary to hold the biggest oil companies accountable for these costs as climate change continues to threaten our infrastructure, coastlines, and livelihoods. By passing the bill today, the NYS Senate has offered a needed lifeline to everyday people and local governments who currently bear these costs alone. Now it’s up to the NYS Assembly and Governor Hochul to make this lifeline a reality.”

Ben Elkind, Lead Organizer of the New York Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC-NY), said, “As a statewide organization of Reform Jews, we applaud the NY Senate for passing the Climate Change Superfund Act. The Superfund Act embodies the Jewish value of “repairing the world” (“tikkun olam”). Reform Jews from 40 congregations across New York have proudly advocated for this legislation. We call on the NY Assembly to pass this critical legislation, so that we can secure a livable New York for generations to come.”

“When you make a mess, you clean it up,” said **Theodore A. Moore, Executive Director of climate and labor organization ALIGN**. “That’s the principle behind the Climate Change Superfund Act — the state’s biggest corporate polluters must pay for the destruction they’ve caused, not our communities. The CCSA will also mean real opportunity for working families, creating good green jobs in construction, engineering, electrification, and health care to advance the state’s resiliency efforts. We applaud the Senate’s leadership in passing this essential legislation and call on the Assembly and Governor Hochul to take action and fund our climate future.”

Background:

The Act would make Big Oil companies help foot the skyrocketing bill for climate damage repair, resiliency, and community protection programs—currently borne by local governments and state taxpayers. The bill would create a fair and just funding stream to take the burden off working families by providing a \$3 billion grant program with \$1 billion, or 35%, going to state-designated DACs every year for the next 25 years.

The bill directs the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to promulgate regulations, after a public participation period, that would guide the allocation of the \$3 billion. A NYPIRG report explored a potential approach that *could* be taken to spend the Climate Superfund’s “environmental justice” \$1 billion program for DACs. NYPIRG divided the \$1 billion by the 1,736 DACs census tracts, which could result in \$576,037 per census tract’s worth of climate repair, resilience, and protection (RRP) programs for every year for the next 25 years. The report noted that this is only one of a number of potential scenarios of how the funding could be disbursed.

Under this scenario, the Climate Superfund Environmental Justice \$1 billion program has the potential to provide the following funding to DACs. The report summarized the potential grants per county and per region, including the following regional potential Climate Superfund Environmental Justice annual grants. (Attached is a list of the regional amounts with sample county amounts.) The report can be found at www.nypirg.org.

Potential Climate Superfund Environmental Justice Annual Grants

Long Island: \$49 million
New York City: \$550 million
Lower Hudson Valley: \$131 million
Capital District: \$40 million
Northeast Upstate: \$6.3 million
Northwest Upstate: \$19.6 million
Central NY: \$58 million
Southern Tier/Rochester: \$69 million
Western NY: \$71 million

For more information, see this recent release and Disadvantaged Communities Report by NYPIRG
https://www.nypirg.org/pubs/202404/Press_Packet_Climate_Superfund_Report_4.2.24.pdf