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Contact: Alex Bornemisza, 716-435-4840

abornemisza@nypirg.org

NEWS RELEASE

ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS + GVT WATCHDOGS URGE LAWMAKERS TO “SAY NO” TO THE HOCHUL ADMINISTRATION’S EFFORT TO GUT CLIMATE LAW IN BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS;

INSTEAD “GET UNDER THE HOOD” TO EXAMINE ADMINISTRATION’S CLIMATE MATH, REVIEW THE ADMINISTRATION’S COMPLIANCE WITH 7-YEAR OLD CLIMATE LAW, AND HOLD PUBLIC HEARINGS *AFTER* THE BUDGET

A coalition of environmental and community leaders joined together to criticize the Hochul Administration’s apparent effort to jam into budget negotiations a plan to undermine the state landmark seven-year-old Climate Law.

Last week, the Administration unveiled a four-page document asserting that the Climate Law would add thousands of dollars to New Yorkers’ energy bills. That was released *after* public budget hearings had concluded and the governor had *not* included the measure in her publicly-released budget plan.

The Climate Law was signed seven years ago. The groups want to know why now, at the last minute, the Hochul Administration is advancing this plan. Both the Hochul Administration and its predecessor have been criticized for a lackluster effort to implement the Climate Law.

The groups argued that the analysis is too thin, the consequences too great, for the Hochul Administration’s proposal to be jammed into last minute budget negotiations. Instead, state lawmakers should insist that the governor’s proposal be considered out of the budget, be subject to meaningful public scrutiny, and that public hearings be held.

"Instead of proposing to galvanize the state's so-far-lethargic effort to meet the science-based goals of the Climate Law, apparently the governor wants to back off and give up," **says Alex Bornemisza, Western New York Regional Director at NYPIRG.** "How can we blame a law we're not implementing for the rising cost of gas? The Legislature should firmly reject the governor's move. The governor's apparent plan is too consequential to get jammed into secret budget negotiations."

"Governor Hochul has recently raised tens of thousands of dollars from lobbyists for the polluting corporations that have been trying to kill New York's climate response for decades," **said Robert Galbraith, a senior research analyst at the Public Accountability Initiative.** "This makes her flip-flop on whether New Yorkers deserve clean air and a functioning ecosystem predictable, but no less shameful."

"Bill Nowak, who was a member of the Housing and Energy Efficiency Advisory panel to NY's Climate Action Council said: "Governor Hochul we need you to untie yourself from fossil fuel interests. There are ways to make the Climate Law effective in protecting the climate while saving us from the crushing debt the fossil fuel industry is forcing on us. A gutsy, Buffalo-tough fighter would be focused on making that happen."

Climate Law - from attacks by the fossil fuel industry, investor-owned utilities, and the corporate business lobby," **said Dawn Wells-Clyburn, Executive Director of PUSH Buffalo.**

"Implementing the Climate Law equitably and swiftly remains the clearest path forward to an affordable, healthy, renewable energy-based economy and energy system that works for PUSH Buffalo's members and frontline communities across our region. Governor Hochul's escalating threats to pause or rollback provisions of the Climate Law feed directly into an industry playbook to advance false solutions like new nuclear generation capacity and continued investments in frack gas power plants and infrastructure that are the true culprits in current and projected energy cost increases. Its past time for the Governor to uphold the law in order to accelerate a just transition, make polluters pay, ensure affordable energy for all, and stop corporate greed."

"The Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act is about the legacy we leave our children. We have a choice: continue down a path of pollution and climate instability, or build a future with clean air, healthy biodiverse soil that sustains life for generations. At Open Buffalo, we believe every child deserves to inherit a planet that is healthier than the one we were given, and that means protecting New York's climate law and moving forward, not backward," **said Franchelle Parker, Executive Director at Open Buffalo.**

"I've been struggling like a lot of my friends and family to afford basic necessities in my life, in particular, my utility bills. Last fall I was able to get my house weatherized thanks to support from the team at PUSH," **said Buffalo resident and PUSH Buffalo member, Marcel Stokes.** "As a result, I've been warmer this winter and I'm not paying as much for my gas and light bill as I might have been otherwise. At this time, with federal cuts to programs like HEAP, we all need as much support as we can get. PUSH fought for the NY Climate Law in 2019 knowing it would

be a powerful tool to protect folks like myself in our community from greedy utility companies, like National Fuel Gas, that are jacking up our rates and shutting people's service off in order to fund expensive, dirty gas infrastructure. Folks in my community deserve more and demand better from Governor Hochul. Hands off our Climate Law!"

Gov. Hochul, the CLCPA isn't just policy, it's our survival. Why is NYS subsidizing corporate polluters while utility rates rise? We are urging you to stop prioritizing the fat bank accounts for big polluters and start prioritizing the health and well being of New Yorkers.~ **Rahwa Ghirmatzion, senior fellow, Just Solutions and founding SC member of NY Renews**

"The possibility of making changes to this landmark law during the budget process is un-transparent and undemocratic. For generations disadvantaged communities have had no say in environmental laws that affect their health and we have made great strides with the CLCPA and the Cumulative Impacts law. This process is taking us backward and we are not going back". - **Chris Murawski Executive Director Clean Air Coalition of WNY**