The New York Public Interest Research Group Fund (NYPIRG) is a non-partisan, nonprofit, research and public education organization dedicated to enhancing the public voice in critical public policy debates in order to strengthen democracy, enhance the rights of consumers and voters, and protect the environment and public health in New York. Over the past four decades, we have educated hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers, recruited tens of thousands of community members from all parts of the state, conducted research, produced studies and reports, and promoted key public interest issues in the media, enhancing NYPIRG’s institutional impact and empowering New Yorkers.
From Our Executive Director

Year after year, thanks to our dedicated supporters, staff, and volunteers, NYPIRG continues to have a meaningful impact on policies affecting the environment, public health, and democratic institutions for all New Yorkers. This past year, we:

- Brought together over 100 organizations to urge an expansion in the state’s energy efficiency programs, and to urge the state Attorney General to continue to investigate the actions by oil, coal, and gas companies that misled the public on the dangers of global warming.
- Successfully promoted policy reforms that would increase state support for public higher education; require more accountability in state spending on mass transit; ban the use of indoor tanning salons for minors; and provide more state funding for environmental protections, cancer screening, and health insurance coverage.
- Issued analyses of water contamination, prescription drugs prices, hospitals’ patient visitation policies, New York City subway and bus performance, and ethics and lobbying activities.

But there is still an enormous amount of work left to do. New York must be more aggressive in tackling the threat posed by climate change, increase protections for drinking water, make college more accessible and affordable, and do more to expand its democracy. With your help, NYPIRG will be there to fight for all of these issues, and more. Onward!

Blair Horner
Protecting New York’s Environment and Promoting a Clean, Renewable Energy Future

From advocating for policies that combat climate change, to protecting critical water resources, to reducing waste, NYPIRG fights to protect the environment of New York State and its residents. With climate deniers leading federal policy, it is incumbent upon New York and other states to promote forward-thinking, sustainable environmental policies.

This year, NYPIRG’s reports, media outreach, community engagement, and watchdog efforts focused on the steps New York must take to be a national environmental leader.

Reducing Solid Waste

According to a 2015 report in the Journal of Science, it is estimated that over eight million tons of plastic waste ends up in the world’s oceans each year, and that amount is likely to increase dramatically over the next decade unless nations act. New Yorkers alone use over 20 billion plastic bags annually.

Single use plastic bags pose a significant threat to the environment and wildlife, and the cleanup costs are a burden to taxpayers.

NYPIRG released a policy paper examining the impacts of plastic bag waste and the benefits of a ban on single use plastic bags. We also joined with more than 185 groups across New York State in support of strong measures to reduce plastic bag waste in New York.

NYPIRG’s 2018 Earth Day Platform

1. Ban the sale of new fossil fuel powered cars.
2. Grow New York State’s solar power capacity.
4. Promote wind energy development, both offshore and on land.
5. Stop forcing New Yorkers to pay over $1.3 million per day to prop up nuclear power plants.
6. Stop all fossil fuel infrastructure expansion.
7. Make New York State a leader on energy efficiency
8. Reduce and reuse food waste.
10. Protect drinking water resources.
Fighting Climate Change

Climate change is the most urgent issue of our time. The last five years have been the hottest in recorded history, and a warming planet has dire consequences. Climate change causes extreme weather – bring more intense and frequent heat waves, severe droughts, heavier rainfall, dangerous flooding, and outbreaks of deadly disease.

NYPIRG directly educated and engaged hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers about steps New York must take to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. Most importantly, New York must invest in renewable energy sources like solar and wind, and reject any investment into infrastructure that supports the fossil fuel industry, including oil and gas pipelines, storage facilities, gas compressor stations, and gas-electric conversion plants.

We brought together over 100 organizations to urge an expansion in the state’s energy efficiency programs, and to urge the state Attorney General to continue to investigate the actions by oil, coal, and gas companies that misled the public on the dangers of global warming.

NYPIRG released a policy paper examining the benefits of banning the sale of new fossil fuel cars and moving to 100% electric vehicles. Transportation is a major producer of the greenhouse gas emissions fueling global warming. Nearly 30% of greenhouse gas emissions are generated in the transportation sector. Bold steps are necessary to address the issue of a rapidly warming planet.
Community Right-to-Know – What’s in My Water

New Yorkers have a right to know about the water in their tap. In 2017, NYPIRG released “What’s In My Water?”, a one-stop, comprehensive, statewide compilation and analysis of New York drinking water systems, along with an interactive, online tool for the public to access information about their local drinking water supply. New Yorkers use “What’s In My Water?” to:

- Pinpoint primary aquifer and surface water sources for drinking water within the state.
- Identify potential threats to public drinking water facilities/sources.
- Find regulated and unregulated contaminants identified in drinking water supplies through test results.
- Enhance public understanding of drinking water supplies and how to safeguard them.

This year, NYPIRG updated our What's In My Water? tool to highlight the locations of AFFF-Certified Airports and Military Fire Training Sites, which have been linked to the contamination of groundwater and nearby drinking water supplies by perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS). It also includes information on the presence of contaminants found through state and federal laboratory testing, and the location and nature of some potential threats to local drinking water (searchable by ZIP code and maps). The 2018 update includes Brownfield data, information on lead in drinking water, and information on private water well testing.
NYPIRG, in partnership with our sister organization, the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG Group), conducted a large-scale, non-partisan voter registration campaign on college campuses and in communities across New York.

Over 16,000 Voters Registered!

Voters Guide and the Constitutional Convention

To ensure voters had access to relevant information at the voting booth, NYPIRG released a voters guide for the three referendum questions on the November General Election ballot – questions that are often missed by New Yorkers when filling out their ballots.

One important question facing New Yorkers was whether or not to convene a state Constitutional Convention (Con-Con), whereby all aspects of the state Constitution would be up for review. NYPIRG did not take an official position on the Con-Con question – instead we laid out the central pro and con arguments for consideration in our voters guide, and in a series of articles and media interviews throughout the state in the weeks leading up to the election. NYPIRG promoted our “Constitutional Convention: New Yorker’s Road Map to the Constitutional Convention” to inform New Yorkers about how the Constitutional Convention process works. Ultimately, New Yorkers voted overwhelmingly against convening a Constitutional Convention.
Empowering Civic Leaders of Tomorrow

2018 Youth Civic Engagement Fellows

Winita Peters
Queensborough Community College

I very much enjoyed working on the City Council profiles. Researching the district members was a challenge, however, the experience taught me a lot about the City of New York, our district leaders, and what they fight for.

Veronika Podoprigora
John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Working with the Straphangers Campaign has shown me the direct impact advocacy groups have on policymaking and legislation. Specifically, I enjoyed the opportunity to learn about the city’s budget process through workshops and attending hearings during budget negotiations.

James Waldo IV
Lehman College

The most enjoyable aspect of this fellowship was being able to gain real world experience in what it takes to thrive as a political organization. And I learned about navigating the New York City Council.

In 2018, NYPIRG launched the Youth Civic Engagement Institute to offer in depth training to a select group of public college students interested in pursuing public interest, social justice, or government careers. The goal of this program is to address the low civic participation rates by young people in New York City by:

(1) Developing a corps of youth civic leaders with a deep well of organizing skills.

(2) Teaching youth about political processes from the local level on up.

(3) Empowering students to effect change on issues of concern to New York City residents, and in particular, young people.

(4) Fostering peer-to-peer civic engagement and other methods by which we can increase youth participation in political processes.

Students selected for the spring 2018 fellowship participated in workshops and trainings, closely monitored the 2018 New York City and New York State budget processes, attended community meeting and other public events, conducted a group research project to profile the 53 New York City Council Members, worked under the guidance of a NYPIRG staff mentor, and engaged their peers through voter registration and other activities on their college campuses.
**Government Watchdogging**

The incredible scandals and controversies that have rocked the state capital in recent years have provided an opportunity for NYPIRG to research and offer best ethics practices to guide policymakers in their debate over needed reforms. From campaign finance, to ethics regulation, to oversight of the lobbying industry, NYPIRG continued to be a leading voice in the call for ethics reform in Albany. This year we:

- Took on the political establishment in statewide media over its failure to tackle corruption in state government through a series of op-eds and news articles.
- Issued analyses of ethics and lobbying activities, including our [Albany Money Machine](#) report highlighting the number of fundraisers held during the legislative session.
- Updated our [legislative profiles of all 213 State Assembly Members and Senators](#).
- In partnership with other good government and civic groups, called for an [overhaul in ethics enforcement](#), a [series of measures](#) to restore public trust in New York State government, and a [strengthening of transparency and oversight of the programs most at risk for corruption](#).
- Published a series of [recommendations to the NYC charter revision commission](#) that would increase civic engagement and remove barriers to voting.
Empowering Patients and Their Families

From helping New Yorkers protect themselves from skyrocketing drug prices and toxic chemicals, to advocating for visitors’ access to loved ones in the hospital, to ensuring accessibility to high quality and affordable medical care, NYPIRG takes on a broad range of topics to protect and empower health care consumers.

An illness that requires a hospital stay is a stressful time for patients and their families, often involving a number of medical and financial decisions, which may have lasting impacts. It is essential that patients are involved in making these decisions, and they should have the option of including loved ones in the dialogue as well.

In advancement of these goals, NYPIRG teamed up with the Institute for Patient- and Family-Centered Care and New Yorkers for Patient and Family Empowerment. We conducted a survey of websites and visitation policies in 22 New York City area hospitals, and fostered direct partnerships to help them improve their visitation policies and foster patient and family involvement in health care decisions. NYPIRG also released the third of our “Sick, Scared, and Separated from Loved Ones” report series analyzing patient visitation policies.

Our work had an immediate impact – a number of the hospitals surveyed made significant improvements to their patient visitation policies and their websites.

Looking ahead, NYPIRG and our partners also began visitation policy surveys and outreach to hospitals across New York State, with a new report expected in 2019.

Toxics in School Supplies

For more than 40 years, NYPIRG has helped parents make informed choices when purchasing toys and other items for their children and families. In partnership with the USPIRG Education Fund, NYPIRG released a guide to purchasing safe, non-toxic school supplies. The report also highlighted specific products that contain harmful chemicals such as lead, asbestos, phthalates and benzene, and should be avoided.

Tobacco Control

The leading cause of lung cancer is tobacco use, and lung cancer is responsible for one quarter of all cancer deaths. New York State collects over $1 billion in revenues from tobacco sales annually, yet has slashed tobacco control funding by more than 50% over the past seven years. NYPIRG released a policy paper to continue to highlight the need for increased investment in programs that reduce tobacco use and prevent new tobacco users.
Strengthening Community Infrastructure and Improving Mass Transit

For the past four decades, NYPIRG’s Straphangers Campaign has been a leader in the fight for safe, affordable, and reliable mass transit in New York City. Our reports, media, advocacy, and public education efforts highlighted the need for a greater investment in transit infrastructure, and for better and more reliable service for New York City’s bus and subway riders. This past year, the Campaign:

- Raised public awareness about shortfalls in MTA capital and operating funds, which have resulted in deteriorating infrastructure and severe delays in service.
- Worked to improve bus service as a lead member of the Bus Turnaround Coalition.
- Fought for increased accessibility for riders with disabilities – in the subway system and through paratransit services like Access-A-Ride.
- Was part of a coalition that led a successful campaign to win discounted fares for New York City’s poorest residents.

Improving Bus Service

NYPIRG is a lead member of the Bus Turnaround Coalition, a group of transit and community organizations dedicated to modernizing and improving New York City bus service. In July, the Straphangers Campaign and TransitCenter released our 2018 Pokey and Schleppie “awards” highlighting the slowest and least reliable bus routes in New York City. The winner of the Pokey award, a golden snail on a pedestal, was the M42, traveling at a rate of only 3.2 miles per hour. The Schleppie award for the least reliable service went to the B12, with more than one fifth of all buses arriving off schedule in bunches.

Victory! For the first time in over half a century, the MTA committed to a complete overhaul of citywide bus service, known as the Bus Action Plan, which was largely influenced by the Bus Turnaround Coalition’s reporting, of which the Straphangers Campaign is a key member.
Fair Fares

One in four low-income New Yorkers cannot afford to access New York City’s transit system due to the cost of a MetroCard. As a key member of the Fair Fares coalition, the Straphangers Campaign has worked to highlight the challenges low income riders face in paying for transit and to explore the possibilities of new discounts for these riders.

The Campaign participated in media events and actions at City Hall and across New York City and collected thousands of petition signatures in support of a reduced fare program for low-income New Yorkers in the city budget.

Victory! In the spring of 2018, Mayor de Blasio agreed to fund Fair Fares in New York City’s FY2019 budget.

Transportation and Equity: A Vision for New York State Leadership in 2018

New York City’s transit infrastructure is not keeping up with the needs of the riding public, with crumbling infrastructure, increased delays, and lack off accessibility. Along with other New York City transit and civic organizations, NYPIRG co-authored a report highlighting budgetary, legislative, and policy agenda items New York State must take to invest in and improve mass transportation in New York City.

Celebrating Four Decades of the Straphangers Campaign

On November 15th, NYPIRG staff, alumni, friends, colleagues and transit organizations from across the city gathered at The Wooly Public in the historic Woolworth Building to celebrate Four Decades of the Straphangers Campaign proudly honoring Gene Russianoff and the Campaign’s vital, groundbreaking work for safe, reliable, and affordable New York City mass transit. It was a wonderful evening, highlighted by an appearance by MTA Chairman Joe Lhota, and proclamations from multiple City and State leaders recognizing Gene’s amazing accomplishments over the years.
The following is an overview of NYPIRG’s income and expenses for the fiscal year ending August 31, 2018.

**Board of Directors**

Jay Halfon, President  
Ludovic Blain III, Director  
Lisa Howard, Treasurer  
Chris Meyer, Director  
Neysa Pranger, Director  
Camille Rivera, Director

**Executive Director**

Blair Horner

**Contact Us:**

New York Public Interest Research Group Fund, Inc. (NYPIRG)

9 Murray Street, Lower Level  
New York, NY 10007  
Phone: (212) 349-6460  
Fax: (212) 349-1366  
Email: nypirg@nypirg.org  
Website: www.nypirg.org

Facebook.com/nypirg  
Twitter.com/nypirg