Written Testimony of Jay Best

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Submitted for the September 26th Roundtable on Meeting New York's Climate Targets
Convened by Senator Liz Krueger and Senator Pete Harckham

Introduction

Good morning, and thank you Senators Krueger and Harckham for convening this timely and necessary discussion on how New York can meet the goals of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA). My name is **Jay Best**, and I am the CEO of **Green Team LI**, a home performance and energy efficiency contractor serving Long Island. I also serve as a proud member of the **Building Performance Contractors Association of New York (BPCA)**, representing companies and workers across the state who are directly implementing the clean energy transition in people's homes every day.

New York's success in meeting its climate targets will ultimately depend on whether households across the state can access and afford energy efficiency upgrades and electrification technologies such as heat pumps. Contractors like those in BPCA are on the front lines of this effort. We know firsthand the obstacles that slow down progress — and the solutions that could accelerate it.

In this testimony, I will highlight **seven priority actions** that the State of New York should take to get back on track toward its climate goals while ensuring the transition is affordable, equitable, and sustainable.

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1. Long-Term Consistent Funding

One of the greatest challenges facing contractors is the lack of stable, predictable funding. Incentive programs are frequently launched, paused, or modified, creating uncertainty for both contractors and homeowners. These disruptions prevent companies from making long-term

investments in workforce development, training, and equipment. Homeowners, in turn, lose trust in the process when programs suddenly change or funds run out.

If New York is serious about meeting the CLCPA targets, the state must commit to **multi-year, consistent funding streams** for home performance and electrification programs. Stable funding allows contractors to expand staff and train workers with confidence, while homeowners gain the assurance that rebates and incentives will be available when they are ready to act. Predictability builds momentum; uncertainty stalls it.

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2. Availability of Low-Cost Financing

Even with rebates and incentives, many homeowners — especially those with low or moderate incomes — struggle with the up-front costs of insulation, air sealing, and electrification projects. Current financing options are often limited, expensive, or inaccessible to credit-challenged households.

New York should expand its Green Jobs Green NY Financing program to allow for larger projects and more credit challenged households. This could be modeled on **Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE)**. PACE financing ties repayment to the property rather than the individual's credit, making it more accessible to a broader range of homeowners. A well-designed statewide program would enable families to spread costs over time through their property tax or utility bill, eliminating affordability barriers.

Without an affordable financing option that works for all New Yorkers, the transition will remain out of reach for many households — and the state will fall short of its goals.

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3. Simplified Administrative Process

Today, the administrative burden of participating in energy efficiency and electrification programs is excessive. Contractors are required to submit duplicative paperwork, navigate multiple portals, and wait long periods for approvals and payments. This slows projects, increases costs, and discourages both contractors and customers.

The state should **streamline program administration** by:

- Creating a unified application process that works across incentives, rebates, and financing.

- Standardizing documentation requirements and reducing redundant submissions.

- Ensuring faster turnaround times for contractor payments.

Simplification will reduce overhead, lower costs, and ultimately make it easier for households to access the benefits of the clean energy transition.

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4. Reduce Permitting Complexity for Electrification Projects

Electrification projects such as heat pumps, electrical service upgrades, and solar installations are often delayed by inconsistent and overly complex permitting requirements across municipalities. Contractors must navigate a patchwork of local codes and approval processes, adding time and cost to every project.

The state should work with local governments to **standardize and simplify permitting requirements** for electrification projects. Options include:

- Developing a statewide model permitting framework for heat pumps and panel upgrades.
- Providing technical assistance and training for municipal code officials.

Reducing permitting friction will allow projects to move forward faster, cut costs, and encourage more contractors to scale up their efforts.

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5. Ensure Homes Are Properly Insulated Before Installing Heat Pumps

Heat pumps are a cornerstone of New York's clean energy transition, but they must be installed in homes that are properly insulated and air sealed. Without addressing the building envelope first, systems end up oversized, costs increase, and efficiency is compromised.

The state should ensure that **home performance measures are a prerequisite** for electrification projects wherever possible. By prioritizing insulation and air sealing, New York can:

- Reduce the overall cost of electrification.
- Improve comfort and indoor air quality for residents.

- Ensure heat pumps deliver on their promise of efficiency and affordability.

This “efficiency first” approach is essential to achieving both climate and consumer goals.

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6. Create Electrification Rates That Favor Heat Pumps

Utilities currently lack rate structures that make heating with efficient heat pumps more cost-effective than using fossil fuels or electric resistance. Without favorable electrification rates, homeowners may not see the promised savings, which undermines adoption.

The state should work with utilities and the Public Service Commission to develop **time-of-use and electrification-friendly rates** that reward efficient electric heating. These rates should:

- Make heat pumps consistently cheaper to operate than oil, gas, propane, or resistance heating.
- Encourage load shifting to align with renewable generation.
- Protect affordability for vulnerable customers.

Aligning utility rates with policy goals is critical to ensuring widespread adoption of electrification technologies.

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7. Provide HEAP Benefits for Electric Heat

Finally, equity must be at the center of New York’s climate strategy. Today, the **Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)** provides significant benefits for households using oil or other fossil fuels, but benefits for electric heating are far less generous. This inequity penalizes low-income families who want to transition to heat pumps.

New York should provide **HEAP benefits for electric heat that are on par with oil**. Doing so would:

- Ensure the lowest-income New Yorkers can afford to heat their homes with clean energy.
- Prevent vulnerable households from being left behind in the transition.

- Align social safety net programs with state climate goals.

Without this adjustment, the very households who would benefit most from reduced energy costs will remain locked into fossil fuels.

Conclusion

Contractors like those in the Building Performance Contractors Association are ready to deliver the projects needed to meet the CLCPA targets. We have the workforce, the technology, and the commitment. What we need from the state is clear: **long-term funding, affordable financing, streamlined processes, simplified permitting, efficiency-first standards, fair utility rates, and equitable support for low-income households.**

Each of these actions is achievable. Taken together, they will create a stable, accessible, and equitable framework for New Yorkers to participate in the clean energy transition. Without them, we will continue to fall behind our climate commitments.

I thank you for the opportunity to testify today and look forward to working with you and your colleagues to implement the policies that will make the CLCPA a reality for all New Yorkers.

Respectfully submitted,
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