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Senate Roundtable on legislative, budgetary, and executive agency actions necessary to get New York back on track to meet our CLCPA targets, September 26, 2025.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony on behalf of the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) to provide our recommendations on the legislative, budgetary, and executive agency actions necessary to get New York back on track to meet the legally mandated goals of the CLCPA.

NRDC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting public health and the environment and committed to tackling the climate crisis. Since its founding in New York in 1970, NRDC has advocated for ambitious and pragmatic policies that address pressing environmental challenges. Considering the wholesale assault on environmental protection programs and funding at the Federal level, New York must boldly step in to ensure New Yorkers' air and water is safe, and our economy is strong and focused on the future.

At Climate Week 2025, we stand at a crossroads, not about climate science, or about the profound and terrible impacts climate change is already having on our state, nation, and world that we witness every day, but how to effectively demonstrate and communicate that climate actions are the smart, lowest cost investment in our communities, health, infrastructure, and future economic and societal benefits, in the face of insidious disinformation from those that would keep us stuck in the past.

New York will continue to move ahead with the economically efficient investments that make our homes, vehicles, schools, communities, and businesses stronger and better, because that is the smart, equitable way to run our state, and deliver a better future for our children.

Here is our list of the legislative, budgetary, and executive agency actions necessary to get New York back on track to meet our CLCPA targets, thank you.

Legislative:

1. The Governor must sign the bill repealing the 100' rule for subsidized gas main interconnections. This will save gas customers more than $200 million per year, improving affordability. (S.8417/ A.8888)
2. The Assembly must pass NY HEAT Act enabling a safe, smart, affordable transition of the gas distribution system. This will save gas customers billions of dollars over the coming decades. (S.4158/ A.4870)
3. Pass the Stop Climate Polluter Handouts Act, to end the use of tax dollars to subsidize fuels that worsen public health and climate change. (S.3606A/ A.3675)
4. Pass legislation enabling cities to use low-cost municipal bond financing to provide affordable building retrofit services to meet greenhouse gas reduction mandates, deliver air-conditioning for all, and improve public health.
5. Healthy Homes Right to Know Act. The Assembly needs to pass this common sense, customer notification bill that will protect children. (S.1280B/ A.73B)

Agencies:

1. Release the Cap-and-Invest regulations for greenhouse gases and co-pollutants as the Clean Air Initiative

   The state must release the full suite of required regulations necessary to move forward the Clean Air Initiative cap-and-invest program. California just reauthorized their program for the next twenty years; providing predictable, consistent funding for critical affordability measures and climate projects. While the Sustainable Future Fund capital spending will help move forward important projects and demonstrate the benefits of climate investments, it falls short of the necessary sustained sources of funding needed to meet the demands of smart economic investments to improve electric system reliability, reduce energy costs, improve our buildings, which are the oldest in the nation, and address the climate crisis.

   The CLCPA required DEC to issue regulations to limit greenhouse gas and co-pollutants by January 2024. Cap-and-invest will include those regulations and reduce emissions by requiring purchase of allowances by suppliers of polluting fuels and others sources of significant emissions. There are very few regulatory options at the state level to reduce emissions from the buildings and transportation sectors, which are the first and second largest sources of climate and air pollution in New York; cap-and-invest is the best of those options, with the largest emissions reductions, and highest benefits for New Yorkers, at the lowest cost.

   The extraordinary improvements in air and water quality in New York over the last half century that have benefited all our residents and all our communities are at grave risk from attacks on the bedrocks of environmental and public health protections. Every day we delay state action on

the Clean Air Initiative we delay the promise of cleaner air for disadvantaged communities and long term investments for more affordable, modern energy infrastructure, homes, and transportation delivered by New Yorkers in tens of thousands of new clean energy jobs.

Budget:

1. The Sustainable Future Fund was directed earlier this week to important climate mitigation projects to make our communities healthier, stronger and more resilient. The Clean Air Initiative should supplant the one-off funding of the SFF as soon as possible, but in the interim there should be another round of SFF in the FY27 budget if having CAI implemented in 2026 is impossible.