

May 3, 2022

Good Morning, President Harris, Commissioner Segos and members of the Climate Action Committee (CAC). I want to thank you for your continued work on this important issue and for providing us with the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Carlo Casa, I am the Director of Research and Policy at the New York Building Congress. I am speaking on behalf of Carlo A. Scissura, President and CEO of the New York Building Congress.

The New York Building Congress comprises more than 550 constituent organizations made up of 250,000 skilled tradespeople and professionals. These include architects, engineers, contractors, and laborers—many of whom design and build the projects that create a more sustainable New York. As such, we commend our partners in state government for enacting the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) in 2019 and their work since then to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, achieve net-zero emissions, increase renewable energy usage, and ensure climate justice. We acknowledge that climate change is one of the biggest threats we face today. However, we want to ensure that when achieving these goals, the Climate Action Council has considered all energy options and implements an economically sound energy transition.

The current CAC draft scoping plan includes numerous bans such as, no new gas service to existing buildings beginning in 2024, no natural gas in newly constructed buildings beginning in 2024 and no new natural gas appliances for household activity beginning in 2030. By focusing on electrification alone, instead of lower-cost, and similarly carbon neutral energy sources, we run the risk of significantly increasing the cost of constructing buildings. This makes it more difficult financially for our members to work on important public projects, particularly affordable housing, of which the city is in desperate need. When implementing this transition, we insist the committee ensures building costs stay stable, affordable and that low-income households are not disproportionately affected by an exacerbated housing shortage.

At this time, we cannot meet New York's energy needs with just the renewable energy that is projected to be available over the coming decade. We commend Governor Hochul and the State legislature for including funding in the New York State Budget to reach the goals outlined in the CLCPA but urge the CAC to also work with the federal government to utilize impending infrastructure funding to incentivize the development of clean energy and clean water infrastructure. Additionally, we urge the committee to investigate a hybrid approach that uses all clean technologies available to us, including RNG and green hydrogen.

The New York Building Congress and its members are committed to advancing policies that aggressively combat climate change and protect our future generations. We can appreciate the complexity of overhauling New York's energy system, but in doing so we must ensure adequate supply, promote economic development, and protect our disadvantaged communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.