

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on the draft Climate scoping plan. My name is Judith Myerson and I live in Pine Bush, New York, in the town of Mamakating. I am asking that you meet the goals set by the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, insure that our state has an effective and realistic plan in place to meet climate goals. By doing so we can serve as a model for other states and the world for a just transition to renewable energy and insure a future for humans and other species on Earth. While I am 72, and will not be here to see the results if we do not quickly shift our path, my grandchildren and their children will reap the consequences of our actions or inactions. We owe it to them to act ethically, morally, and comprehensively now, and do all that is possible to create a livable, sustainable, safe and equitable world for all.

JUST TRANSITION SECTION:

Please include the following recommendations in the Just Transition Section of the plan. This will insure that the outcomes of this plan are driven by both climate and environmental justice, as required by, the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA):

The Just Transition section already includes many key provisions that prioritize justice for our workers and communities in the transition to a carbon-free economy. The Just Transition Principles provide a framework for a transition that is collaborative, community-centered (particularly in reference to disadvantaged communities), and that seeks to uplift equity while emphasizing the need to create high-quality, family-sustaining jobs across all sectors of the new, green economy. It also recognizes the need for accessibility in workforce and career trainings, such as multi-lingual trainings, online and in-person options, and trainings at varied times. It includes the suggestion to combine green economy workforce development with wraparound services and additional workforce trainings, such as OSHA or U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) training; the need to fund job recruitment, training, hiring, and retention for DAC minority- and women-owned businesses (MWBES), service-disabled veteran-owned businesses (SDVOBS), co-ops, and employee-owned businesses; and the need to incentivize stable employment over the gig economy. **While these are all good, there is ample room for improvement.**

The Scoping Plan needs much stronger language on supporting labor standards and food procurement and production. Specifically, rather than “labor standards should be further evaluated and enhanced” (p. 44), the Scoping Plan must lay out policies requiring prevailing wage and benefits, project labor agreements, and benchmarks for local hire on any projects that use State funds or take place on State property, as well as encourage community benefits agreements. The Scoping Plan should also advance Buy NY and Best Value Procurement policies, leveraging the State’s purchasing and contracting power to (a) incentivize job creation along the clean energy, clean transportation, and low-carbon supply chains; and (b) prioritize companies and contractors that support just transition principles including local hire, high-roads jobs, and job access for traditionally excluded populations. Buy NY should

also extend to food production. The Scoping plan should support the values-based purchasing standards of the Good Food Purchasing Program already endorsed in NYC and Buffalo that incentivize institutional purchasing from local, organic and BIPOC farms. Buying locally grown food reduces emissions from long- distance transport. Fresher foods are healthier. Foods grown in healthier soils that by NYS law definition have higher levels of soil carbon are more nutrient dense. Organic production of food without toxic chemicals and water/soil depletion practices is also healthier for children and all people, the soil and our Earth.

The chapter fails to adequately lay out a plan to directly support displaced workers. Instead, it focuses only on (re)training opportunities—continuing education, Registered Apprenticeship programs, certifications, and licensing in trades. While these are all essential, they are in no way the complete picture of direct support. The Climate Action Council should recommend the establishment of a Worker and Community Assurance Fund. This to provide direct support, including full wage replacement and pension support to workers in fossil fuel-dependent industries. Expanding funding to communities who rely on fossil-fuel dependent industries to compensate for lost tax base to local governments and school districts also needs to be included. A Workforce Assessment Plan where fossil fuel plants are decommissioned should also be insured. This to keep impacted workers informed on job creation and losses, enable them to contribute to the transition process and accommodate their career and retirement plans.

The chapter should also expand its focus beyond the power generation sector, exploring the impacts and opportunities in all other sectors. For instance, according to the State's research, the transportation sector is the only sector to face net displacement, while the buildings sector is expected to be responsible for over half of all sub-sector employment growth. The realities of this shifting workforce should be explored outside of workers directly employed in the fossil fuel industry.

The chapter should also incorporate language around including not only displaced workers and disadvantaged communities in the reshaping of a green economy workforce, but also groups who have been traditionally excluded from the green workforce, such as women and the formerly incarcerated. As steps are taken to remedy these issues, the Climate Action Council should lay out specific strategies the State will take to ensure these just transition principles are met, something the Scoping Plan lacks in its current iteration.

Finally, Equitable Public Health Outcomes are a part of any Just Transition Plan. In New York State, there are significant disparities in health outcomes for certain groups by age, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Adopting and enforcing a just transition will decrease our current response to or inability to respond to negative climate impacts such as threats to infrastructure like saltwater intrusion, help workers advocate for better protections and safety standards, reduce their risk of harm or injury,

and improve overall health equity. It will also help make sure the green workforce has necessary benefits, including access to affordable healthcare.

In Summary:

- **The Scoping Plan fails to adequately address direct support for displaced workers. The CAC should recommend the establishment of a Worker and Community Assurance Fund** to provide direct support to fossil fuel-dependent workers across sectors as well as to communities who rely on fossil-fuel-dependent industries. Support should include wage replacement and pension support for displaced workers as well as expanded funding for lost tax base to municipal and county governments as well as school districts.
- **There is a need for stronger language around labor standards.** Instead of stating that “labor standards should be further evaluated and enhanced,” the Scoping Plan must lay out policies requiring prevailing wage and benefits, project labor agreements, benchmarks for local hire, as well as encourage community benefits agreements on any projects that use State funds or take place on State property.
- **The Scoping Plan should also advance Buy NY and Best Value Procurement policies,** leveraging the State’s purchasing and contracting power to (a) incentivize job creation along the clean energy, clean transportation, and low-carbon supply chains; and (b) prioritize companies and contracts that support local hire, high-roads jobs, and job access for traditionally excluded populations. The State should also consider additional policies and programs to incentivize companies to bring high-roads green jobs to NY. and that support local, organic and healthy, soil sustaining food production for all New Yorkers
- **The State should provide direct funding for training, workforce development, apprenticeship, and pre-apprenticeship programs across sectors** (e.g. training for public transit workers, school bus workers, and waste haulers on electric vehicles; training for buildings workforce on new manufacturing methods and construction approaches to improve building envelopes; and training for fossil fuel industry employees on clean energy technology). This should include funding (wage coverage) to support worker attendance at existing training courses, and more.