My name is Lynn Saxton. I am the Co-Chair of the Climate Reality Project Western New York Region Chapter, a group of 46 concerned activists in the Rochester and Buffalo area. As a chapter, we are a few of the thousands of members of the New York State Coalition of Climate Reality.

As a grandmother of three beautiful children and a former high school teacher, I am very concerned about the future the next generation will face. The CLCPA is a significant step in the right direction, and it sets New York State up as a model for other states to follow. We must not allow disinformation campaigns by the fossil fuel industry to derail this important law.

Regarding transportation, I am a new owner of a Kia Niro EV. I love my EV, especially in this era of record high gasoline prices. As I also have community solar through NYSERDA (thank you!), the electricity that fuels my car comes at a discount. I love also that my new car does not add pollution emissions to the air we breathe. Auto emissions create much pollution that harms our health. I truly appreciate the federal tax credit and the NYS incentive that helped me afford this car, which will pay for itself in savings on fuel, although I was disappointed that the incentive for home charging stations ended in December.

I would urge the Council to immediately fund and start a sustained statewide education and awareness campaign on the benefits of electric public and private transportation systems free of tailpipe emissions and pollution. This education campaign is necessary to counter the relentless and massive disinformation crusades by fossil-fuel interests and status-quo forces who’ve spent decades perfecting their chicanery, first to deny climate science, and now to cast doubt on the solutions. Given their long and expansive track record of weaponizing disinformation to sustain the extraction and burning fossil fuels, the absence of a public information component in the scoping plan is a surprising, but grave oversight.

**What do we need?**

We are in a critical stage of the climate crisis driven by continued greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and must start reducing emissions dramatically in order to avert the worst effects of climate change.

Transportation accounts for about 28% of New York’s GHG emissions. It is widely accepted that phasing out the use of fossil fuels such as gasoline and diesel and shifting to electricity as the sole energy source for vehicles, while simultaneously expanding public transportation and making it more efficient, reliable, and affordable, and investing in Transit Oriented Development are the key means of decarbonizing the transportation sector. Once electrified, the GHG emissions associated with transportation will decline as more distributed and centralized carbon-free sources of electricity are added to the grid.

**How do we get there?**

I wholeheartedly support the plan to reduce emissions through strong investment in EV charging infrastructure, by incentivizing EV adoption, and by electrifying the State vehicle fleet, as well as reducing total vehicle miles driven through expansion in public transit and promoting smart growth along public transit lines.

I am particularly alarmed at the complete lack of funding and efforts for building out an EV charging infrastructure in New York to support the rate of vehicle electrification that is required to meet the CLCPA emissions targets and to support other New York State mandates, such as a ban on the sale of new gasoline-powered vehicles starting 2035.

An accelerated State-supported fast-charger infrastructure build-out must accompany the accelerated adoption of EV’s. Further build-out can be realized by incentivizing employers, retail and grocery stores, and other places where cars are parked for extended periods to install charging stations. Particular attention must be paid to residents of apartment complexes, renters, and street-parking vehicle owners. We encourage the state to develop Vehicle-to-Grid (V2G) charging capabilities for personal vehicles for micro-grid stabilization. Finally, EV adoption must be supported through adjustment of utility rates to encourage EV use and off-peak charging.

In addition to areas in and around NYC, usable public transportation must be developed in all urban locales in the State. Intercity public transit should be included in the plan.

Furthermore, I support easier direct-to consumer sales of ZEVs and the elimination of sales tax on all ZEVs.

**Combating disinformation**

Just like in the building sector, disinformation campaigns from fossil-fuel interests are centered around casting doubts about the solutions. Public education efforts must be undertaken to help New Yorkers realize that (1) Electric Vehicles reduce pollution and emissions even with the current fuel-mix of New York’s electricity supply because they use much less energy compared to vehicles with internal combustion engines for traveling the same distance. (2) While there are concerns around the extraction of certain materials used in EV batteries and motors, the environmental and human toll of extracting, transporting, and refining petroleum is far greater because petroleum is a fuel that a vehicle continuously consumes while the battery materials are used only once per vehicle and there are viable recycling options that will scale up as the supply of used batteries ramps up.

**Housing policy affects transportation emissions and energy use**

Study after study shows that allowing for walkable, mixed-use, and multifamily housing close to public transit greatly assists us in reducing our carbon footprint and revitalizing our local downtown areas. It will also help us with our housing shortage. Multifamily housing also reduces emissions related to the building sector by reducing heating and cooling energy usage due to smaller exposed surface area per dwelling.

Transit-oriented development (TOD) doesn’t only mean mid- or high-rises. It can be townhouses, duplexes, quadplexes, or other context-specific multifamily housing located within half a mile of public transportation.

TOD boosts our local economy and is a potential game-changer for young people and families who might have trouble finding housing in their price range. It leads to less dependence on cars, more use of public transit, more walkable and revitalized downtown centers, more educational opportunities for children, and provides a reliable source of funding and ridership for public transportation.

**Summary**

New York State must move full steam ahead, without delay, towards making electricity the principal energy source for powering its public and private small- and medium-duty vehicles while rapidly advancing heavy-duty transportation towards a net-zero future through a mix of electrification and renewable fuels. The state must expand public transportation options, particularly those outside the NYC metro area, including inter-city transportation. Finally, New York state must educate and incentivize communities to embrace transit oriented medium- and high-density development, which has benefits that go far beyond emissions reduction.

The Climate Action Council put forth three scenarios for our climate future. I am advocating for Scenario #3, which includes low-to-no bioenergy and hydrogen and the simultaneous acceleration of electrification of both buildings and transportation to ensure clean air and a healthy environment.

I would like to thank the Council for their hard work and I hope you will be steadfast in your implementation of the CLCPA targets. Please discount the multi-million dollar disinformation campaign that is currently being waged by the fossil fuel industries, which is full of lies and scare tactics. Thank you.