Memorandum of Support

A. 10342 Englebright / S.8005 Savino, Avella, Hoylman

Title: An act to amend the environmental conservation law, the public service law, the public authorities law, the labor law and the community risk and resiliency act, in relation to establishing the New York State climate and community protection act.

Purpose: The purpose of this bill is to enact the "New York State Climate and Community Protection Act" to address and mitigate the impacts of climate change in New York.

Statement of Support: Climate change is hurting New York. In only the past few years the state has been pounded by superstorms, deluged with floods and scorched with record heat due to the advancing effects of a warming planet. Beyond the growing frequency and intensity of severe weather events, New Yorkers will be facing the economic and social costs of dying oceans, agricultural blight, rapid changes to ecosystems and rising sea levels if we do not work together to significantly reduce carbon emissions.

The New York State Climate and Community Protection Act (A.10342) will put New York State on the path to 100% renewable energy by 2050 and set benchmarks and reporting requirements to ensure we are meeting our goals along the way. In addition to systematically reducing greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors, the bill promotes healthy communities and will guarantee good jobs and environmental protections for those hardest hit by climate change. This will be achieved by:

- committing New York State to a binding goal of 80% emission reductions by 2050 and sets a path toward 100% clean renewable energy, with an interim goal of a 40% cut in climate pollution by 2030 and 50% renewable energy by 2030. This mandate will be implemented across all aspects of state government with an environmental/climate equity screen to identify impacted and disadvantaged communities that ensures the development of community benefits and good jobs.
- creating a legal requirement to equitably disburse 40% of funds collected pursuant to an order of the PSC or from NYSERDA into environmental justice and low-income communities. Such environmental justice "filters" will facilitate the transition to a new clean energy economy that is supportive of localized economies, healthy environments, community well being, and local control of resources.
- creating local jobs in clean energy and protecting workers impacted by the current transition from fossil fuels - through public investment, renewable energy retraining programs, mandated job standards and targeted local hiring commitments. Schools and communities are compensated for short-term local tax revenue losses where the energy industry is in transition.
- allocating substantial funding beyond what’s currently projected to create a worker and community-centered transition to a 100% clean, non-extractive economy through projects in
This legislation is ambitious, but certainly not as daunting as the challenges climate change has placed before every New Yorker. Last year, the United States joined with the rest of the world in Paris to set ambitious goals for climate action, including keeping this century’s global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees Celsius. We are already at a 1.1-degree rise. If we don’t act resolutely together, irreversible cycles will perpetuate temperature rises and cause out of control warming. Following the pathway set by the New York State Climate and Community Protection Act (A.10342) will give us the best chance to lead the world out of the climate crisis.

The Sierra Club strongly urges your support of this important legislation.