

## MEDIA RELEASE

*For Immediate Release:* May 27, 2022

*Media Contacts:* Jack Lynch, [jack.lynch@berlinrosen.com](mailto:jack.lynch@berlinrosen.com), 908-487-1756; Anne Rabe, NYPIRG, [arabe@nypirg.org](mailto:arabe@nypirg.org), 518-560-1849.

### **MAYDAY DISTRESS SIGNAL FOR CLIMATE LEADERSHIP & COMMUNITY PROTECTION ACT (CLCPA) WITHOUT PASSAGE OF ALL-ELECTRIC BUILDINGS ACT THIS SESSION**

**Climate Action Council (CAC) Member Scientist and Attorney, Building Decarbonization Expert, Biologist, and Hurricane Sandy Survivor Say To Assembly:  
*Do Not Jeopardize New York's Climate Goals***

(Albany) Two prominent CAC members, a building decarbonization expert, biologist and Hurricane Sandy survivor and environmental justice advocate, called on the New York State Assembly to be mindful of the overwhelming data and CAC recommendation underlying the urgent necessity to pass the All-Electric Building Act this session. The speakers reported on the major costs of waiting, in terms of the substantial impact on utility customers and members of disadvantaged communities; the health of every New Yorker, especially sensitive populations, such as the elderly and children; and the state's economy and environment.

The All-Electric Buildings Act, S.6843-C (Kavanagh) and A.8341-B (Gallagher), <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2021/S6843> is a common-sense first-step strategy for decarbonizing buildings. It requires that new buildings are all electric, starting with smaller buildings in 2024 and larger buildings by 2027—similar to the New York City 2021 law. The CAC [recommends](#) a building code for highly efficient, all-electric new construction should be enacted through legislation in 2022. The bill is supported by 220 national, state and regional organizations and businesses, including Alliance for a Green Economy (AGREE), Building Performance Contractors Association of NYS, Citizen Action, Climate Reality Project, Food & Water Watch, Mothers Out Front, NY Communities for Change, NY-GEO, New Yorkers for Clean Power, NYPIRG, Sierra Club, and WE ACT for Environmental Justice.

The public health benefits of the All-Electric Buildings Act are massive. Children living in a home with a gas stove have a 42% increased risk of having asthma symptoms and a 24% increased risk of being diagnosed with asthma by a doctor, according to the most recent peer-reviewed meta-analysis. New Yorkers carry an asthma burden much higher than the national average, nearly 10% of our population has a current asthma diagnosis.

In light of that public health risk, organizations representing **more than 9,000 health professionals**, including physicians, nurses, and public health experts, have signed a letter calling on the legislature to pass the All-Electric Buildings Act this year. Those organizations include the New York State Public Health Association, Concerned Health Professionals of New York, Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments, Physicians for Social Responsibility New York, and New York Clinicians for Climate Action.

"The New York climate act requires that we reduce greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors of the State by 40% within the next 7 to 8 years, as recommended by United Nations' policy," said **Bob Howarth, PhD, Cornell University earth systems scientist and a Climate Action Council member**. "The largest source of emissions by far in New York is the heating of our homes and commercial buildings, so reducing these emissions must be a top priority. A first step towards doing so is to ban the use of fossil fuels in new construction ASAP, and instead encourage beneficial electrification of heating through high-efficiency heat

pumps and other modern technologies. Recent studies indicate that this transition would actually reduce construction costs and utility bills, as well as move us towards carbon neutrality."

"Transitioning away from fossil fuel use in our buildings is critical for achieving New York's climate goals, avoiding financial risk, and improving public health, said **Amar Shah, Rocky Mountain Institute's Carbon-Free Buildings Manager.** "All-electric new construction is a common-sense, cost-effective first step that will help avoid hundreds of millions of dollars spent over several years on new gas connections with even higher costs to retrofit these homes down the road. It will also start to address the more than \$20 billion annual health impacts of air pollution from New York's buildings."

"The truth is clear—we need to move away from combustion in buildings if we are to reduce emissions in New York State," said **Raya Salter, Esq., Executive Director of the Energy Justice Law and Policy Center, and a Climate Action Council member.** "The All Electric Buildings Act represents an opportunity for New York to show responsible leadership on climate and take real steps towards meeting our ambitious environmental goals."

"New York said 'no' to fracking to protect our health," said **Sandra Steingraber, PhD, senior scientist of the national Science and Environmental Health Network.** "The next logical step is to end the practice of burning fracked gas inside of our homes, starting with new construction. Policymakers, please show courage and leadership; pass the All-Electric Buildings Act."

"The case is clear. Families like my own lost everything in Sandy", said **Rachel Rivera, a Hurricane Sandy survivor and New York Communities for Change leader.** "The climate crisis will get far worse if people like Assembly Speaker Heastie don't step up and stand with people like me, instead of the oil and gas corporate lobbyists."

"The UN says it is now or never," said **Anne Rabe, NYPIRG Environmental Policy Director.** "The AEBA can be implemented today, heat pumps work in cold climates, the grid is ready and the costs for new electric homes are cheaper. We can no longer afford to make decisions based on short-term profits. We must act now."

**Fact vs. Fiction:** The following facts from Bill Nowak, a climate expert and New York Geothermal Energy Organization (NY-GEO) Executive Director, clarify that the bill can be implemented today, and soundly dispel the fossil fuel industry misinformation campaign.

- Two recent studies found it is LESS expensive to construct new all-electric buildings minus the gas infrastructure costs. The first, on upstate buildings, was done by the New Buildings Institute and shows a savings of more than \$7,500[1]. The second from the Long Island Power Authority shows a savings in the Long Island market of \$6455. [2]
- The state's energy grid can handle the coming demands of electrification to meet the state's climate goals through 2031. In fact, the electric grid is currently most stressed on the hottest days of summer when air conditioning is needed, mostly from inefficient window units. Building new homes with modern, efficient heat pumps is a great way to reduce strain on the grid. The NY Independent System Operator, charged with ensuring electric supply meets demand, reports that even under a high load scenario needed to electrify the transportation and heating sectors, peak demand in 2031 will be less than peak demand experienced on the grid in 2011 and 2013. due to energy efficiency measures New Yorkers are already embracing. [3]
- Building codes require new buildings to be well insulated. Air source and ground source heat pumps should have no trouble meeting the heating and cooling loads of well insulated buildings

---

[1] <https://newbuildings.org/new-study-on-electrification-costs-shows-benefits-to-building-owners-and-society/>

[2] <https://www.flipsnack.com/lipower/lipa-building-decarbonization-fact-sheet/full-view.html>

[3] <https://www.nyiso.com/documents/20142/2226333/2021-Gold-Book-Final-Public.pdf/b08606d7-db88-c04b-b260-ab35c300ed64>, Figures 1-2 and 1-3.