



On the Backs of New York State Households: The Extreme Costs of Climate Change Impacts Families in Every Region of the State

A Region-by-Region Analysis of the Statewide Taxpayer Tally Per Household of \$2.2 Billion in Climate Costs

New Yorkers are in a “perfect storm” situation created by the devastating impacts of the escalating climate crisis, the huge costs faced to mount a response, and the lack of a dedicated fund to pay for those soaring costs. Without a revenue source for climate programs, by default, the costs have been placed on the backs of state and local taxpayers. How much are New Yorkers paying? This report seeks to answer that question and recommends a solution based on fiscal fairness and environmental justice.

New York State Taxpayers Burdened With \$2.2 Billion or \$300 Per Household in Climate Costs; New York City Taxpayers Additional \$562 Per Household

An analysis by NYPIRG found New York State taxpayers were heavily burdened by \$2.2 billion in climate costs in 2023 or \$300 per household.¹ A second analysis of NYC taxpayer climate costs estimated future costs of \$162.9 billion, or \$50,906 per household, and the projected 2024 cost is \$1.8 billion, or \$562 per household.²

This report’s snapshot of the state’s climate costs is just the tip of the iceberg. There is ever-growing evidence that the costs of adapting infrastructure and establishing programs to

¹ Average of \$300 per NYS household, 2.2 billion is divided by 7,604,523 = 289.302 (<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/NY>). The data comes from Governor Hochul’s 2023 news releases. Data is intended to summarize state taxpayer amounts only, however, due to lack of information, some federal funds may have been included inadvertently.

² Source: https://www.nypirg.org/pubs/202311/Report_and_Release_Costs_of_Climate_Change_Nov2023.pdf

protect people from the dangers of a rapidly heating planet and the new *abnormal* are staggering. This begs the question: *Why are households collectively paying \$2.2 billion when those responsible for the climate crisis are raking in record profits and paying nothing?*

Our report recommends a fair and just funding stream be established to take the burden off working families and free up critically needed funds for renewable energy, public health, and other social service programs. The Climate Change Superfund Act (S.2129A/A.3351A) places the escalating climate expense burden where it belongs—on the Big Oil companies who created the climate crisis and are making record profits from it.

The bill is based on the highly successful Federal Superfund “polluter pays” law created 43 years ago that has cleaned up thousands of toxic dumps. It would require Big Oil companies that released large amounts of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from 2000 to 2018 to pay apportioned fees totaling \$3 billion a year. The state must create a climate program based on foundational financial fairness and environmental justice. Make Big Oil climate polluters—not hardworking New York families—pay.

Governor Hochul, the Assembly, and the Senate need to address climate crisis costs by putting fiscal fairness and environmental justice front and center and include the Climate Change Superfund Act in the FY 2025 Budget.

Regional Taxpayer Tally of Climate Costs

This first-ever regional analysis summarizes the state tax climate costs in every area of New York. All the data was obtained from Governor Hochul’s 2023 News Releases. We used the regional categories of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). A map showing the nine regions can be found at the end of the report. Each regional cost summary includes a quote from a local elected official, such as Mayors, Town Supervisors, and City Comptrollers. The analysis was conducted by the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG). [An Excel spreadsheet, found here, provides links](#) to the news releases and the regional projects in detail.

Our analysis found the following climate crisis costs for the nine regions in New York State.

Long Island

DEC Region 1: Nassau and Suffolk Counties

Climate Costs in 2023: \$276 million for climate-related repairs, resilience, and community protection projects



Beach erosion near the Royal Atlantic Beach Resort in Montauk on Long Island.

[Image by John Taggart for Wall Street Journal.](#)

“January has been a brutal month for Long Island.

Torrential rains, strong winds, and high tides have pounded the island on multiple days in what some officials described as the worst storm since Superstorm Sandy. Protecting Long Island alone will cost at least \$75 to \$100 billion. That’s why I, along with one hundred of my fellow local elected officials, are urgently calling on Governor Hochul and the Legislature to include the Climate Change Superfund Act in this year’s state budget.”

—Cate Rogers, Deputy Supervisor, Town of East Hampton ([City & State, 1/25/2024](#))

New York City

DEC Region 2: Brooklyn, Bronx, Manhattan, Queens, and Staten Island

Climate Costs in 2023: \$309 million for climate-related repairs, resilience, and community protection projects



A biker attempts to navigate New York City's flooded streets in September 2023.

[Fatih Aktas/Anadolu Agency/Getty Images](#)

“As climate change gets worse, it’s getting more expensive—and right now, New York taxpayers are stuck paying the bill for the mess that Big Oil is still making. That’s why I’m urging the Governor and Legislature to support the Climate Change Superfund Act. And these costs are particularly high in New York City. A recent study from [First Street Foundation](#) found that New York City faces the greatest rise in risk of catastrophic hurricane damage over the next 30 years, more than any other city in the country. [Average annual losses](#) from hurricanes alone will skyrocket from around \$2.1 million this year to \$8 million every year in three decades. That’s on top of the [\\$52 billion](#) the Army Corps of Engineers is proposing to protect New York Harbor alone, and another [\\$55 billion experts are predicting](#) will be necessary to protect the rest of the state over the next decade.”

—Brad Lander, New York City Comptroller,

[Letter to Governor, Senate Majority Leader and Speaker, 5/9/2023](#)

Lower Hudson Valley

DEC Region 3: Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster and Westchester Counties

Climate Costs in 2023: \$297 million for climate-related repairs, resilience, and community protection projects



Flooding in New Paltz around Route 299, Ulster County on Monday, December 18, 2023

[Photo by William Wheeler Murray](#)

“For us on the local level, that means asking our residents to pay more in property taxes, fees, and other costs. Fortunately, there is another option to reduce this burden on local governments and taxpayers. Instead of asking New Yorkers to dig into their own pockets for the entire cost of climate adaptation, we can make the multinational fossil fuel companies that are responsible for and profiting from the climate emergency pay their fair share. That’s why we’re asking you to support the Climate Change Superfund Act.”

—[Elected Officials to Protect America Letter to Governor Hochul](#),
including Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger, Chair of NYS Association of Counties Climate,
Energy, Environment Committee, 12/28/2023

Capital District

DEC Region 4: Albany, Columbia, Delaware, Greene, Montgomery, Otsego, Rensselaer, Schenectady and Schoharie Counties

Climate Costs in 2023: \$205 million for climate-related repairs, resilience, and community protection projects

“Our local governments see the impact of this growing threat in our budgets, as we struggle to both repair and rebuild from previous extreme weather events and invest in measures to adapt and become more resilient in the face of the climate emergency. A recent study from the State Comptroller found that from 2018 to 2028, 55% of New York localities’ municipal spending outside of NYC was or will be related to the climate emergency.”

—[Elected Officials to Protect America Letter](#),
including Mayor Kathy Sheehan, City of Albany, 12/28/2023

North East Upstate

DEC Region 5: Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Saratoga, Warren and Washington Counties

Climate Costs in 2023: \$184 million for climate-related repairs, resilience, and community protection projects

“Between 2011 and 2021, New York State endured 16 major disaster declarations, sparing no region of the state. During this period, FEMA allocated over \$17 billion in assistance to New York State. This staggering sum is more than just a number, it represents countless New York Families who lost their homes or livelihoods. Our local governments see the impact of this growing threat in our budgets, as we struggle to both repair and rebuild from previous extreme weather events and invest in measures to adapt and become more resilient in the face of the climate emergency.”

—[Elected Officials to Protect America Letter](#),
including town Council Member Tom Wood, Town of Plattsburgh, Clinton County, 12/28/2023

North West Upstate

DEC Region 6: Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida, and St. Lawrence Counties

Climate Costs in 2023: \$191 million for climate-related repairs, resilience and community protection projects

“The cost of living across New York is already too high—we simply cannot afford to place the cost of adapting to the climate emergency solely on the backs of our constituents. We need the state to act now to hold the biggest polluters accountable. We need the Climate Change Superfund Act.”

—[Elected Officials to Protect America Letter](#),

including Supervisor Ann Carvill, Town of Potsdam, St. Lawrence County, 12/28/2023

Central NY

DEC Region 7: Broome, Cayuga, Chenango, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga, Oswego, Tioga, and Tompkins Counties

Climate Costs in 2023: \$234 million for climate-related repairs, resilience, and community protection projects

“Under the Climate Change Superfund Act, thirty to forty of the largest multinational oil, gas, and coal companies would be required to pay \$75 billion over 25 years to New York State for damages arising from their past activities, money that would be earmarked to help localities like ours pay for climate-adaptive infrastructure. Companies deemed responsible for the emission of over one billion tons of greenhouse gases since the year 2000 will pay a portion of the total amount based on their share of the total emissions of all responsible companies. That means companies like Exxon and Saudi Aramco, who have made record-breaking profits in the last several years, will pay a portion of the bill, rather than our residents and local businesses. And, critically, the Superfund is designed as an assessment of damages for past behavior that cannot be passed on to consumers.”

—[Elected Officials to Protect America Letter](#),

including Town Supervisor John Deer, Town of Manlius, Onondaga County, 12/28/2023

Southern Tier/Rochester

DEC Region 8: Chemung, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, and Yates Counties

Climate Costs in 2023: \$266 million for climate-related repairs, resilience, and community protection projects

“It seems like year after year a new record is set, whether it’s for heat, or rainfall, or snow. Despite efforts to slash greenhouse gas emissions, it’s clear that the challenges posed by the climate emergency are going to get much worse before they get better.

In the coming decades, we need to invest in a series of high-stakes and costly infrastructure projects. These include significant coastal protections, including restoring coastal wetlands; elevating or buying-out threatened homes; improving storm water drainage and sewer systems; responding to toxic algal blooms; protecting our roads and utility infrastructure; retrofitting schools and other public buildings; and many other vitally important projects.

*We know that these projects are non-negotiable necessities.
The major question is who will pay for them.”*

—[Elected Officials to Protect America Letter](#),

including Councilmember Robin Wilt, Town of Brighton, Monroe County, 12/28/2023

Western NY

DEC Region 9: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Niagara, and Wyoming Counties
Climate Costs in 2023: \$247 million for climate-related repairs, resilience, and community protection projects



Residents on Woodside Drive clear heavy snow, in Buffalo, N.Y, Dec. 27, 2022

[John Normile, Getty Images](#)

“Our communities are on the front lines of the climate crisis, bearing the full weight of its impacts – from the deadly blizzard that struck Buffalo last winter to the unprecedented 1,000-year flooding that submerged parts of the Hudson Valley this summer; from destruction wrought by Superstorm Sandy on Long Island to increasingly frequent catastrophic rainfall in NYC; from choking wildfire smoke that shut down schools in June to scorching heat waves that shut down schools in September. Our constituents feel this looming risk year after year, through all four seasons.”

—[Elected Officials to Protect America Letter](#),

including Mayor Austin Tylec, City of North Tonawanda, Niagara County, 12/28/2023

Climate Change Superfund:

Based on Fiscal Fairness and Environmental Justice

Governor Hochul, the Assembly, and the Senate need to address climate crisis costs by putting fiscal fairness and environmental justice front and center and include the Climate Change Superfund Act in the FY 2025 Budget. The Climate Change Superfund Act (S.2129A/A.3351A) places the escalating climate expense burden where it belongs—on the Big Oil companies who created the climate crisis and are making record profits from it. The state must create a climate program based on foundational financial fairness and environmental justice. Make Big Oil climate polluters—not hardworking New Yorkers—pay.

The legislation is supported by 400 environmental, community, faith, and labor groups, including the New York State Association of Counties, Elected Officials to Protect America, NYPIRG, NY Renews, DC 37, Environmental Advocates NY, Food & Water Watch, ALIGN, NRDC, NYS Council of Churches, NYS Nurses Association, UUP and UAW Region 9 and 9A.

The funds would allow New Yorkers to invest in massive and life-saving infrastructure improvements, upgrade stormwater drainage and sewage treatment systems, prepare the power grid for severe weather, create systems to protect people from extreme heat and respond to environmental and public health threats. The Climate Superfund will result in a major increase in green jobs in many sectors, including construction, engineering, and health care.



CENTRAL OFFICE
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233
(518) 402-8044

REGION 1

■ **STONY BROOK**
50 Circle Rd.
Stony Brook, NY 11790
(631) 444-0200

◆ **MARINE RESOURCES HO**
123 Kings Park Blvd.
Nissequogue River State Park
Kings Park, NY 11754
(631) 444-0430

REGION 2

■ **LONG ISLAND CITY**
1 Hunter's Point Plaza
47-40 21st St.
Long Island City, NY 11101
(718) 482-4900

REGION 3

■ **NEW PALTZ**
21 S. Plutt Corners Rd.
New Paltz, NY 12561
(845) 256-3000

● **WHITE PLAINS**
220 White Plains Road, Suite 110
Tarrytown, NY 10591
(914) 428-2505

REGION 4

■ **SCHENECTADY**
1130 N. Westcott Rd.
Schenectady, NY 12306
(518) 357-2234

▲ **FIVE RIVERS**

56 Game Farm Rd.
Delmar, NY 12054
(518) 475-0291

● **STAMFORD**
65561 State Hwy. 10, Suite 1
Stamford, NY 12167
(607) 652-3501

REGION 5

■ **RAY BROOK**
1115 Route 86
PO Box 296
Ray Brook, NY 12977
(518) 897-1200

● **WARRENSBURG**
232 Golf Course Rd.
Warrensburg, NY 12885
(518) 623-1200

● **NORTHVILLE**
701 S. Main St.
PO Box 1316
Northville, NY 12134
(518) 863-4545

REGION 6

■ **WATERTOWN**
317 Washington St.
Watertown, NY 13601
(315) 785-2239

● **UTICA**
207 Genesee St.
Utica, NY 13501
(315) 793-2554

● **HERKIMER**
225 N. Main St.
Herkimer, NY 13350
(315) 866-6330

● **LOWVILLE**
7327 State Rte. 812
Lowville, NY 13367
(315) 376-3521

● **POTSDAM**
190 Outer Main St., Suite 103
Potsdam, NY 13676
(315) 265-3090

REGION 7

■ **SYRACUSE**
5786 Widewaters Parkway
Syracuse, NY 13214
(315) 426-7400

● **CORTLAND**
1285 Fisher Ave.
Cortland, NY 13045
(607) 753-3095

● **SHERBURNE**
2715 State Hwy. 80
Sherburne, NY 13460
(607) 674-4017

● **KIRKWOOD**
1679 NY Rte. 11
Kirkwood, NY 13795
(607) 775-2545

REGION 8

■ **AVON**
6274 E. Avon-Lima Rd.
Avon, NY 14414
(585) 226-2466

● **BATH**
7291 Coon Rd.
Bath, NY 14810
(607) 776-2165

● **ELMIRA**
100 N. Main St., Suite 104
Elmira, NY 14901
(607) 732-2214

REGION 9

■ **BUFFALO**
700 Delaware Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14209
(716) 851-7200

▲ **REINSTEIN WOODS**
93 Honorine Dr.
Depew, NY 14043
(716) 683-5959

● **ALLEGANY**
182 E. Union St., Suite 3
Allegany, NY 14706
(716) 372-0645



Legend for office types:

- CENTRAL OFFICE
- REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS
- REGIONAL SUB-OFFICE
- ▲ ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER
- ◆ MARINE RESOURCES

Sources

<https://dec.ny.gov/about/contact-us/map-of-dec-offices>

<https://dec.ny.gov/about/contact-us/statewide-office-information>

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news>

Report by NYPIRG and NY Renews. March 20, 2024.

Written by Anne Rabe, NYPIRG. Additional research by Sara Gronim, 350 BK, and Chris Bottini, NYPIRG. Design, layout, and editing by Marie Scarles and Prerana Narahari, NY Renews.