

## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 18, 2024

**Contact:** Cassidy DiPaola, [cassidy@fossilfree.media](mailto:cassidy@fossilfree.media), 401-441-7196,  
Blair Horner, [bhorner@nypirg.org](mailto:bhorner@nypirg.org), 518-727-4506

### **As Extreme Heat Grips New York State, Community Leaders, Local Officials, and Extreme Weather Survivors Call on Governor Hochul to Sign the Climate Change Superfund Act**

*Communities warn that inaction leaves vulnerable communities at risk and lets Big Oil off the hook*

(Albany, New York) – As a [dangerous heat wave](#) grips New York, sending "feels like" temperatures soaring above 100 degrees, community leaders, local officials, and extreme weather survivors are demanding Governor Hochul take immediate action by signing the recently passed Climate Change Superfund Act (S.2129B/A.3351B) into law.

The extreme heat is not just uncomfortable - it's costly. The [average cost of keeping an American home cool](#) from June to September is set to hit \$719, nearly 8% higher than last year and the highest in a decade, according to new projections from advocates for low-income households. In 2021, the average was just \$573. In New York State, it is estimated that in just the past year, Governor Kathy Hochul has spent nearly [\\$2 billion on climate cost and resiliency projects](#).

The Climate Change Superfund Act, passed by both the New York State Senate and Assembly, would require Big Oil companies that released large amounts of greenhouse gas emissions from 2000 to 2018 to pay \$3 billion annually each year for the next 25 years for climate-related damages. Crucially, 35% of these funds, or \$1 billion annually, would be allocated to disadvantaged communities damage repair, resilience, and protection projects.

A [recent NYPIRG report](#) found that under one potential scenario, this could provide disadvantaged communities with climate programs worth \$576,037 per census tract every year.

[A new poll from Data for Progress found overwhelming support for the Climate Superfund Act among New York voters](#). 70% of likely New York voters support requiring oil and gas companies to pay a share of climate damages caused by their pollution, and 53% said they would be more likely to support a candidate who backed such a measure. Moreover, 71% of likely New York voters found it convincing that since oil companies lied about their products causing climate change, it's time to make them pay their fair share rather than leaving consumers to foot the bill.

"Communities of color are disproportionately impacted by climate change. In order to effectively address the environmental inequities faced by members of marginalized communities, we need policies that provide real assistance to our most vulnerable citizens," **said Renae Kimble, President of the Niagara Falls Branch of the NAACP**. "The Climate Change Superfund Act does just that. This is Governor Hochul's chance to begin to right the wrongs of systemic racism and infrastructural neglect that takes place any time there is a weather related emergency or health related disparities due to green gas emissions which exacerbates air pollution in Black

and Brown neighborhoods. By signing this bill, Governor Hochul will provide communities like mine tangible financial resources to build more environmentally safe neighborhoods in areas with the greatest need as well as ensure that equitable resources are available to improve the health and well being of citizens who have been exposed to air and water impurities.”

As extreme heat continues to blanket the state this week, Governor Hochul must prioritize the safety and well-being of all New Yorkers by signing the Climate Change Superfund Act into law without delay.

“Today, we are facing the impacts of extreme heat. It is clear, we are no longer planning for the future, we are responding to the impacts that East Enders, Long Islanders and all New Yorkers are already experiencing, and the millions of taxpayer dollars already needed to recover from flooding, storm surge, deforestation, and the threat of wildfire. That is why we need the Climate Change Superfund Act to be signed into law now. We simply cannot place this burden solely on impacted taxpayers as every level of government seeks to restore our environment and protect our communities, while the fossil fuel companies reap the profits. Make the fossil fuel companies pay for their carbon footprint.” **Cate Rogers, Deputy Supervisor, Town of East Hampton.**

**Merton D. Simpson, Albany County Legislator, District 2 and Co-Chair, Sheridan Hollow Alliance For Renewable Energy (SHARE)**, says, “Through the indefatigable leadership of Anne Rabe, leading a vast coalition 24/7 for several weeks, at 3:22 am June 8, 2024 the NYS Assembly joined the NYS Senate in passing the Climate Change Superfund Act. Now it is up to Governor Hochul to do the right thing and sign the Superfund Act into law. With unprecedented heat all over America including New York State the consequences of not signing the Superfund Act would be gross nonfeasance. The cost of not signing the Superfund Act, NYHEAT and the Renewable Capitol Act are much greater than the cost of taking every conceivable action to control the apocalyptic impact of climate change. Last year Rio De Janeiro reached a temperature of 138 degrees (surpassing the previous July 10, 1913 record of 134.1 degrees F at Furnace Creek Ranch, in Death Valley in the United States).”

“Our future is on fire. Last summer was the hottest on record however, as this week is beginning to show, it will be the coolest one for the rest of my generation’s life. The climate crisis is here, and in New York, from every angle since her congestion pricing backtrack, Governor Hochul has chosen to stand up for big money interests over our generation and our communities,” **said Keanu Arpels-Josiah, 18, Policy Co-Lead with Fridays For Future NYC.** “By joining the Senate in passing the Climate Change Superfund Act the Assembly, a house whose leadership has shot down climate legislation time and time again, has begun to take action and stand up to the fossil fuel industry as they continue to destroy our generation’s future, now it’s time for Governor Hochul to follow suit. Big oil is creating chaos in our communities, and it’s high time they played a role in cleaning that destruction up. Our generation’s future is on the line; Governor Hochul must immediately sign the bill.”

“As a New Yorker, I’ve witnessed firsthand the devastating impacts of climate change on our state, from the rising sea levels threatening our coastal communities to the extreme heat waves putting our most vulnerable neighbors at risk,” **said Cassidy DiPaola, spokesperson for the Make Polluters Pay campaign.** “That’s why I’m grateful to the State Assembly for passing the Climate Change Superfund Act. Now, it’s time for Governor Hochul to stand with the legislature and the majority of New Yorkers who support this bill. By signing it into law, Governor Hochul can ensure that Big Oil, not hardworking taxpayers, foot the bill for the critical investments needed to protect our communities from the damage these polluters have knowingly caused.

Governor Hochul has the power to be a true climate leader and make New York a model for the nation. We urge her to seize this historic opportunity and sign the Climate Change Superfund Act without delay. New Yorkers have suffered enough - we need action now."

"Governor Hochul has a historic opportunity to protect our taxpayers and communities. Cities, villages, towns, and counties across the Empire State are harmed by escalating costs wrought by fossil fuels pollution. That's why more than 100 local elected officials are urging the Governor to enact the Climate Superfund to hold Big Oil accountable for the billions of dollars in damages they caused our communities," **said Dominic Frongillo, Executive Director of Elected Officials to Protect America (EOPA) Code Blue and former Deputy Supervisor of Caroline, NY.** "With the Governor's swift signature, the oil and gas companies that lied to the public with decades of deception will help pay to repair and prepare for climate damages they caused."

"This first heat wave of the season will not be the last. Due to climate change, heat waves now occur [three times as often as they did in the 1960s](#). Heat domes (which are more stationary heat waves) are also [150 times more likely due to climate change](#). As we all know, extreme heat is particularly dangerous — among the [deadliest of all extreme weather events](#)," **said Blair Horner, NYPIRG Director.** "Global energy-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions hit a [record high](#) last year, according to the International Energy Agency, and 2023 was the [hottest](#) year on record. The state, the nation, and the world need to *stop* using fossil fuels as quickly as possible. Governor Hochul can help protect *taxpayers* by ensuring that Big Oil contributes to the cleanup of the mess that they made."