

NEWS RELEASE

Elected Officials, Environmental Advocates Rally for Climate Change Superfund Act in Wake of Unprecedented Climate Catastrophes in NY

Governor Hochul only has until the end of the year to sign legislation that makes polluters, not taxpayers, pay for climate disaster repairs and resilience

NEW YORK, NY – As Governor Hochul’s bill signing deadline quickly approaches, a coalition of environmental and civic organizations joined Congressmembers including Jerry Nadler, Comptroller Brad Lander, State Senators Liz Krueger and Brian Kavanagh, Assembly Members Jeff Dinowitz and Grace Lee, in calling for Governor Hochul to approve the Climate Change Superfund Act (S2129B/A3351B). The coalition, which includes NYPIRG, Food & Water Watch, Extreme Weather Survivors and more, highlighted the growing financial costs facing taxpayers due to climate damages. The Climate Superfund will require the biggest oil companies to pick up the cost for at least some of the climate-related damages they are responsible for, instead of sticking taxpayers with the growing tab. The bill passed both houses and now it’s up to Hochul to sign it into law before the end of the year.

So far this year, [with New Yorkers experiencing a record number of extreme weather events](#), Governor Hochul has pledged approximately [\\$1.4 billion in taxpayer spending to clean up Big Oil’s climate change mess](#). The new Trump Administration may place at risk future federal funding for climate-related projects, and already, FEMA is [denying funding](#) for New York localities cleaning up after climate-driven disasters. The Climate Change Superfund Act can help make up that gap.

“Climate-driven extreme weather has impacted New Yorkers’ lives and livelihoods for over a decade and is becoming worse and more frequent. Most recently, brush fires have engulfed the city, causing New Yorkers to inhale smoke and residuals for days. With the incoming Trump administration, we’ll need even more funding in the face of the escalating and increasingly expensive climate disasters threatening our infrastructure like wildfires, droughts, flooding, and extreme heat. The Climate Change Superfund Act will make up that gap by putting Big Oil on the hook for at least some of those costs, instead of taxpayers. To offset the state’s looming and growing climate-caused infrastructure costs, Governor Hochul must sign the Climate Change Superfund Act ASAP!” said **Blair Horner, Executive Director of NYPIRG**.

Congressman Ritchie Torres said: "I stand in solidarity with climate justice advocates calling on Governor Hochul to sign the Climate Change Superfund Act. It is time for the biggest polluters to take responsibility for their contributions to climate change and help fund the solutions. Together, we can work towards a more sustainable and equitable future for all."

“Climate change is one of the most existential threats of our time, and it is our responsibility to take action to safeguard the environment for our current and future generations. I commend my colleagues in government for pursuing the Climate Change Superfund Act, which will not only hold big oil companies accountable for the impacts of their policies and actions, but will also help offset the cost of necessary climate-related projects. I urge Governor Hochul to sign this bill,” said **Congressman-elect George Latimer**.

“The Climate Change Superfund Act is unique in that it holds the companies responsible for the largest greenhouse gas emissions accountable in a way that keeps those costs from being passed on to the public,” **Congressman Nadler wrote**. “As you know, the climate crisis is impacting New York immensely. Previously, once-in-a-generation weather events have become more frequent and deadly. In 2022, Winter Storm Elliot in Buffalo [killed 47 people](#). The year before, Hurricane Ida killed 16 New Yorkers — many drowned in their own homes. In New York City, [350](#) residents die every year from heat-related deaths. In the last month, an [“unprecedented” 17 tornadoes hit](#) upstate New York, destroying homes and killing one person. In addition to the human costs, there are also staggering financial costs.”

“As you know, it’s going to cost hundreds of billions to shore up New York against the impacts of climate change – some estimates put the price tags at [\\$52 billion](#) to protect NYC Harbor, [\\$75-\\$100 billion](#) to protect Long Island, and [\\$55 billion](#) for climate costs across the rest of the state,” **Congressman Nadler continued**. “The state Comptroller [has predicted](#) that more than half of the local government’s costs will be attributable to the climate crisis. These costs are falling on taxpayers, even though the largest oil companies, largely responsible for the policy gridlock that kept the nation and the world from tackling the growing climate menace, are [booming](#) and making enormous [profits](#).”

“New York State has long been a leader in addressing critical environmental problems,” **Congressman Nadler concluded**. “The opportunity to offset the skyrocketing taxpayer costs resulting from climate catastrophes and add momentum to the national effort cannot be ignored. I respectfully request your approval of the Climate Change Superfund Act.”

"By signing the Climate Change Superfund Act currently sitting on her desk, Governor Hochul has the power to secure New York’s future against the looming climate crisis,” said **NYC Comptroller Brad Lander**. “As we face an impending Trump presidency that jeopardizes federal support for climate funding, it’s more important than ever that the Governor sign this bill that the State legislature passed to hold companies who have profited from pollution accountable and make New York a beacon of climate resilience and responsibility.”

Senator Brian Kavanagh, who represents the Manhattan Waterfront said: “The Climate Change Superfund Act is a significant step toward holding oil and gas companies accountable for the environmental damage they willfully caused--rather than sticking New Yorkers with the bill. While each of us must do our part to protect the environment, and to mitigate and adapt to the serious negative effects of climate change, it is only just that those who have profited most from fossil fuels also bear the brunt of the responsibility for addressing the crisis they helped create. I commend Senator Krueger, Assembly Member Dinowitz and our colleagues in the legislature for crafting this legislation, and Congressman Jerry Nadler, NYPIRG, Food & Water Watch, and many other advocacy organizations and individual New Yorkers who have been working tirelessly to ensure that we enact it. It is essential that we take this significant step forward for our communities now and for generations to come.”

“The climate crisis is driving up costs for everyone and contributing to the affordability crisis that so many working- and middle-class New Yorkers are facing. Whether it’s through increased insurance premiums, healthcare costs, or local taxes to pay for repairing from and preparing for extreme weather, New Yorkers are bearing 100% of the burden. It’s time for Governor Hochul to sign the Climate Change Superfund Act and make Big Oil pitch in and ease some of that burden,” said **Senator Liz Krueger**.

Food & Water Watch Senior New York Organizer Eric Weltman said: “Fossil fuel corporations have spent decades profiting off climate chaos — it’s time they paid to clean up their mess. We need Governor Hochul to sign the Climate Change Superfund Act now to redirect corporate profits into climate resilience.”

Temperatures in the Hudson River [have risen two degrees](#) fahrenheit in the past two decades, five times greater than the increase in ocean temperatures per decade. More than 230 [brush fires](#) have spread throughout the city in recent weeks, causing smoke to spread throughout the five boroughs. New Yorkers sweltered through weeks of extreme heat this summer - [just by July 17 in NYC, New Yorkers had already experienced more 90+ degree days than the last two years combined](#). Flooding in NYC on August 6 flooded buildings, [trapped people in their cars, and canceled flights](#). [Torrential rain and flash flooding in New York City and Long Island](#) from Tropical Storm Debby August 13, destroying homes, disrupting trains, and causing major, expensive damage all over Suffolk County. Just a few years ago, Hurricane Ida killed 13 New Yorkers. And before that, Hurricane Sandy decimated Manhattan’s seaport, with over six feet of submerging much of the port. New York City is especially vulnerable to climate change - nearly [\\$200 billion worth of property](#) - including housing, transportation, power generation, and waste management - is in the current floodplain, and this is expected to increase [by about 40% by the 2050s](#). [The \\$75 billion raised by the Climate Change Superfund Act could save NY taxpayers \\$825 billion down the road](#).

New Yorkers—many of whom have been directly impacted by Hurricane Sandy and other extreme weather events caused by fossil fuel driven climate change—overwhelmingly support the Superfund Act. One [poll](#) found that [70% of New York voters](#) support the legislation, including majorities across party lines. And [89% of New Yorkers](#) say that they want fossil fuel companies to cover at least some of the cost for climate damages per a Data for Progress poll.

Background

In the final hours of the 2024 Legislative Session, the NYS Assembly passed the Climate Change Superfund Act 92-49. The Senate passed it 43-17 earlier this session, for the second time. Now, all Governor Hochul needs to do is sign the bill to make it law.

The [Climate Change Superfund Act](#) is modeled on the existing State and Federal Superfund law (which requires polluters to fund toxic waste dump cleanups) by making Big Oil climate polluters financially responsible for the environmental damages that they have caused. The top Big Oil companies will be required to pay a combined \$3 billion annually, every year for 25 years.

These costs won’t fall back on consumers, according to economists and [an analysis](#) from the think tank *Institute for Policy Integrity at NYU Law*. According to experts, because Big Oil’s payments would reflect past contributions to greenhouse gas emissions, oil companies would have to treat their payments as one-time fixed costs. “*Regardless of market structures, oil companies are unable to pass on increases in fixed costs to consumers due to economic incentives and competition.*” Experts also argued that “*beyond the design of the Act, oil companies would also be unable to retaliate against New York by raising retail gasoline prices in the state due to the interconnectedness of the national and global energy markets and existing U.S. antitrust laws.*”

New York is facing staggering—and growing—climate costs. In 2023 alone, Governor Hochul announced [\\$2.2 billion](#) in taxpayer funding for climate-related infrastructure repairs and upgrades and resilience projects. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers [estimates that it will cost \\$52 billion](#) just to protect NY Harbor. On top of that, we’ll need [\\$75-\\$100 billion](#) to protect Long

Island, and [\\$55 billion](#) for climate costs across the rest of the state. The state Comptroller [has predicted](#) that more than half of local governments' costs will be attributable to the climate crisis.

Big Oil is at fault for climate change, and it can certainly afford the costs. According to [a study in One Earth](#), the world's 21 top polluting companies are responsible for \$5.4 trillion in climate damages over a period of 26 years. While these climate damage bills pile up for taxpayers, the industry responsible for this mess is [raking in cash](#). From January 2021 through now, Big Oil [has made \\$1 trillion in profits](#).

Those record profits allowed them to deliver unprecedented returns to shareholders while doing little to address the climate crisis [they knew was coming, but did all they could to undermine climate action](#). Starting in the 1970s, scientists working for Exxon made “remarkably accurate projections of just how much burning fossil fuels would warm the planet.” Yet for years, “the oil giant publicly cast doubt on climate science, and cautioned against any drastic move away from burning fossil fuels, the main driver of climate change.”

The Climate Change Superfund Act isn't just necessary—it's popular. According to a poll from Data for Progress, [a whopping 89% of New Yorkers](#) support fossil fuel companies covering at least some of the cost for climate damages. Another [poll](#) found that [70% of New York voters](#) support the Climate Change Superfund Act, including majorities across party lines. Nationally, 89% of Democratic voters support the climate superfund approach, and 53% of New York voters are more likely to vote for candidates who support passing a climate superfund bill. Over 400 community, environmental, labor, religious, and youth groups supported the legislation and it is backed by over 100 local elected officials.