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Unions Endorse Roadmap To Tackle Climate Change at Scale, Creating Over 1 Million Jobs in NYC

CLIMATE JOBS NEW YORK UNIONS ADOPTS NEW PLAN FROM CORNELL UNIVERSITY THAT TACKLES CLIMATE CRISIS, CREATES UNION JOBS

New York, NY - Today, Climate Jobs NY, a coalition of labor unions representing 2.6 million New Yorkers, adopted *Climate for Change, A Complete Climate Jobs Roadmap for NYC*, a new report released today by Cornell University's Labor Leading on Climate Program. The report presents a roadmap for New York City to fight the climate crisis, make NYC safer and address racial and economic inequity by investing in a pro-worker renewable energy transition. The report, which finds that New York City's climate goals are not ambitious enough and that climate work is not happening at scale, outlines a concrete plan for the City to slash emissions and create high-quality union careers.

[View the full report online here.](#)

The report comes as the Adams administration and city officials debate how to invest millions of dollars in unallocated federal infrastructure and relief funds. The report was developed in consultation with unions including the NYC Central Labor Council AFL-CIO, 32BJ SEIU, United Federation of Teachers, Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York, District Council 37 and the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators, New York State Nurses Association, Communication Workers of America and UA Local Union No. 1 The Plumbers of New York City as well as environmental, industry and governmental leaders in New York City.

Climate Jobs NY is urging City leaders to adopt the measures recommended in the report to drastically reduce carbon emissions and pollution and advance job creation and equity.

Climate for Change lists a number of recommendations for each of the following categories: buildings, energy, transportation, resilience and adaptation and workforce development. One of the core recommendations for buildings calls for the decarbonization of all K-12 public school buildings in NYC to reduce emissions, improve indoor air quality for educators and students, and drive union job creation in frontline communities. Climate Jobs NY is organizing around this recommendation through its campaign for [Carbon-Free and Healthy Schools](#), calling on Mayor Adams to fund retrofits and upgrades to antiquated heating and air conditioning systems, aging rooftops, and outdated electrical systems. The report also outlines priority policy recommendations for the Mayor and City Council to implement over the next several years to make New York City healthier and more climate-friendly, including:

- **Buildings**
 - Transform NYC Public Schools, NYCHA and NYC Health +Hospitals buildings to be carbon-free and healthy by 2030.
- **Energy**
 - Make NYC an offshore wind hub with goals to install 15 gigawatts by 2045 and investigate potential to develop green hydrogen hubs
- **Transportation**
 - Construct the Triboro transit line, a direct connection between Brooklyn, Bronx and Queens with potential expansion to Staten Island and a bus rapid transit corridor on Utica Avenue by 2030
 - Install 300 miles of protected bike lanes and 150,000 bike shelters and expand Citibike access to all five boroughs
- **Resilience and Adaptation**
 - Install cool roofs and green roofs on 100% of NYC buildings by 2030
 - Convert 10% of New York City to permeable Open Streets by 2030
- **Workforce Development & Job Creation**
 - Increase funding for direct entry pre-apprenticeships, advocate for the State to remove community hiring barriers and use Project Labor and Labor Peace Agreements on all NYCEDC work.

“In its current state, New York City is unprepared for the extremities that will come with climate change. Whether we look to the extreme storms or rising sea levels and flooding that made their mark on New York City in the past year, the worst is yet to come,” said **Lara Skinner**,

Director of the Labor Leading on Climate Program at the Cornell University ILR School.

“Not only does New York City lack climate resiliency, but it also experiences some of the highest levels of income inequality in the country with low wage workers and communities of color bearing the brunt of climate change’s impacts. With the new Mayor Eric Adams, and an almost entirely new City Council, New York City has the opportunity to lead the world in building a diverse, inclusive and equitable clean energy economy that beats back the worst impacts of climate change.”

“This report provides practical solutions to help us get to net-zero emissions and create over 1 million community-sustaining jobs for New Yorkers who need them most,” added **Anita Raman, Research and Policy Associate Labor Leading on Climate Program, research lead and co-author of the Cornell University report.** “And NYC can start today. With billions of existing dollars going to NYC from the federal infrastructure act, emerging state funds for renewable energy, and a new City leadership willing to make strong financial commitments, there is a huge opportunity to create unprecedented climate job creation and establish NYC as a climate leader to the world.”

“In the past few years, Climate Jobs NY has made strides in pushing New York towards investing in renewable, clean energy resources,” said **Dave Hancock, Interim Executive Director of Climate Jobs New York.** “Now for the first time ever, the unions that represent 2.6 million New Yorkers are endorsing an action plan for our City to address climate change while creating over a million union jobs. From recommendations on cutting down on building emissions, expanding offshore wind, reimaging public transportation and our roadways and improving our climate resiliency, this is truly a vision that will bolster New York City for generations to come.”

What New York Electeds Are Saying:

“Communities of color have long suffered from the effects of environmental racism and the impacts of climate change,” said **Council Member Carmen De La Rosa, Chair of the Council’s Committee On Civil Service & Labor.** “With Cornell’s Climate for Change, City leaders have a clear action plan for how we tackle the climate crisis and address decades of racial inequity. We cannot miss our opportunity. As Chair of the Civil Service and Labor Committee, it is imperative we create pathways to the green economy and ensure green jobs for the front-line.”

“The Climate for Change report vindicates what I’ve said all along – we CAN make our city sustainable and ‘climate change ready’ while creating access to union jobs for the communities

that need it most,” said **Council Member James F. Gennaro, Chair of the Council’s Committee on Environmental Protection**. “Let’s be frank – the climate crisis isn’t going to wait and neither should we. Let’s create the union jobs that will see our City through the challenge of climate change. I thank Cornell University and Climate Jobs NY for presenting this roadmap – I urge my colleagues to join me in taking action to get this done.”

What New York labor leaders are saying:

“Public schools, CUNY, NYCHA and many other New York City facilities can all play a role in our city’s fight against climate change,” said **Vincent Alvarez, President of the NYC Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO**. “The roadmap presented to city leaders is clear in how we can cut carbon emissions while creating good union jobs and ensuring the resiliency of our city for decades to come. New York City unions are ready to work with the City Council and Mayor to bring the *Climate for Change* report to life and bring opportunities to underserved neighborhoods in the process.”

“School leaders know firsthand the critical role that our schools play in sustaining our communities and protecting our environment,” said **Mark Cannizzaro, President of the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators**. “The *Climate for Change* report outlines a bold climate agenda and shows how we can transform our public schools into the carbon-free and healthy facilities our city deserves while saving millions of dollars in energy costs and creating thousands of union career opportunities. We urge the Mayor and City Council to get behind this plan and better prepare New York City schools for the climate challenges to come.

“*Climate for Change* shows us how far New York City is lagging in reducing carbon emissions and investing in green infrastructure, but it also provides a path forward,” said **Michael Mulgrew, President of the United Federation of Teachers**. “UFT members and our students are looking for the Mayor and City Council to invest in Carbon-Free and Healthy Schools and to make the green retrofits and upgrades our school buildings need.”

“The effects of climate change on our city are real - we’ve seen storms cause widespread flooding that we are not prepared for,” said **Henry Garrido, Executive Director, District Council 37, AFSCME**. “That’s why unions all across New York City contributed to the development of *Climate for Change* and demonstrate the moment we have to reduce this city’s carbon footprint and address the impact of climate’s change inequality.

“With the *Climate for Change* report, New York City unions are making it clear that tackling the climate crisis is one of our top priorities,” said **Kyle Bragg, President, SEIU 32BJ**. “This bold vision crafted in partnership with Cornell University is just the framework New York City needs to play its role in fighting climate change. 32BJ and Climate Jobs NY are ready to fight for the real investment and work needed to ensure our City is sustainable for years to come.”

“When the interests of our environment and working people align, we’re all better off for it, and we’ve seen that reality firsthand here in New York,” said Gary LaBarbera, President of the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York. “We’re committed to building a future for our state that is more climate resilient, meets our ambitious clean energy and climate goals, and protects and creates middle-class careers for all New Yorkers. The Empire State has always been powered by its working people, which will certainly continue to be the case in New York’s burgeoning green economy too.”

“We have already seen the destruction that climate change and environmental degradation has had on the health of our patients,” said **Nancy Hagans, President of the New York State Nurses Association**. “Increases in heat have contributed to an increase in hypertension. Pollutants are being discharged into our city air, causing a steady increase in chronic asthma conditions in our most vulnerable communities. In addition, these communities also face environmental injustices like contaminated water supplies and tainted soil. They are also the ones that are usually hit the hardest by catastrophic events such as Hurricane Sandy. The *Climate for Change* report outlines the urgency of these issues and provides a blueprint for action.”

“The *Climate for Change* report outlines a bold vision for action to reduce our carbon footprint while creating thousands of good union jobs,” said **Nicole Bertran, Executive Vice President, Construction Skills**. “Direct Entry pre-apprenticeship providers in the first-of-its-kind Apprenticeship Readiness Collective (ARC) have the expertise to provide apprenticeship readiness and direct entry access to long-term, family-sustaining union careers. By increasing the City’s investment in pre-apprenticeship training, and committing to labor standards on clean energy projects, we can continue to expand opportunities for communities most in need.”

“New Yorkers are facing several converging crises: a changing climate that is hurting working people worst, escalating income inequality, and racial injustice,” said **Mike Prohaska, Business Manager, Laborers Local 79**. “The recommendations in the *Climate for Change* report pose solutions to tackling these crises by creating good union jobs for those who need them most

while combatting the effects of climate change to ensure healthier and safer communities for us all.”

What Climate Groups Are Saying:

"Since the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, we've been building toward a vision to tackle income inequality and climate change, and we can do it by reducing emissions and creating the green jobs of the future. Our allies at CJNY have confirmed once again that this is the only path toward a sustainable NYC. Public schools are among the city's dirtiest buildings, and by committing to retrofits, HVAC upgrades, and solar installation, we can safeguard our children and teachers, create union jobs for communities most impacted by the climate crisis, and reach the goals we've set for our own survival. Now, the onus is on the city to make it happen, and there's no time to wait," said **Maritza Silva-Farrell, Executive Director of ALIGN, a leader of the Climate Works for All coalition.**