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13 NYC Council Members Join 40 Climate & Labor Orgs in Call to Make Climate a City Budget Priority

*Climate Works for All coalition calls for Green, Healthy Schools and Clean Buildings at
Executive Budget Hearing on Education*

New York, NY – Today, in a [letter](#) released by the Climate Works for All coalition, 13 NYC Council Members, including leaders from the Progressive Caucus and the Council’s Labor Committee Chair, announced their support of Green, Healthy Schools and clean buildings as FY2025 budget priorities. They join [40 climate, labor, environmental justice, youth, and parent groups](#) calling on Mayor Adams to deliver on previous promises and fund climate justice. The coalition will be testifying in today’s hearing on education.

The climate crisis is among the biggest threats to New Yorkers’ safety, as extreme weather events become increasingly frequent and the City fails to divest from fossil fuels at the scale necessary to address the crisis. The coalition was encouraged to see investments for energy efficiency, electrification of city facilities, and increased staffing to support Local Law 97 implementation in Adams’ Climate Budgeting announcement, while remaining steadfast in the call for key investments in clean buildings, green schools, and good, union jobs that can save the city money long-term and build a clean, sustainable, and resilient future for NYC.

To implement landmark climate legislation apace and address the interrelated crises of climate change, public health, and social inequality, the letter calls for the following FY2025 budget priorities:

- **Invest in Green, Healthy Schools** Dedicate \$600M in the FY2025 budget to electrify and upgrade NYC Public Schools – the most impactful target on the city’s path to decarbonization – and put the school district on a path to reach net zero emissions by 2040.
- **Fund Local Law 97 Implementation** We are encouraged to see the administration allocate funding to the Department of Buildings for an increase in staff who would work specifically on the implementation of Local Law 97 of 2019 (LL97). To supplement this and ensure that all building owners get sufficient information and are able to access much needed funding

to comply with the law, CW4A is calling on the City to pursue state and federal funding opportunities to support building upgrades and retrofits, increase staffing at the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), and redirecting \$5M of the funding from the NYC Accelerator to local community-based organizations and nonprofits that can provide education, outreach, and technical assistance services on LL97 compliance.

The following Council Members have signed on:

Christopher Marte, District 1

Julie Menin, District 5

Shaun Abreu, District 7

Yusef Salaam, District 9

Carmen De La Rosa, District 10

Tiffany Caban, District 22

Jennifer Gutierrez, District 34

Chi Ossé, District 36

Sandy Nurse, District 37

Alexa Aviles, District 38

Shahana Hanif, District 39

Darlene Mealy, District 41

Chris Banks, District 42

"As a proud advocate of strong Local Law 97 implementation and the Green, Healthy Schools campaign, the investments in environmental protections and resiliency cannot be delayed further. Communities in Upper Manhattan and the Bronx have the highest asthma rates in the country, and environmental justice communities face the brunt of divestment in green infrastructure. Our partners in organized labor are equipped to train a workforce in the green economy – retrofits and investing in greener schools can create over 45,000 union jobs. We must invest in a greener future for NYC and work alongside our Climate Works for All coalition as well as our labor partners," said **Chair of Committee on Civil Service and Labor and Co-Vice Chair of the Progressive Caucus, Council Member Carmen De La Rosa.**

"New York City must lead in a just transition away from dirty fossil fuels by investing in Green Healthy Schools and prioritizing the implementation of Local Law 97. Funding energy efficiency and clean renewable energy in both our public and private buildings can catalyze good green jobs and build healthier communities. The environmental justice, labor, community, and climate organizations in Climate Works for All understand the urgency of the climate crisis, and the importance of realizing a clean, sustainable, and resilient future for our city," **said Council Member Sandy Nurse, Co-Chair of Progressive Caucus and Chair of the Committee on Criminal Justice.**

"Climate Works for All stands at the intersection of justice and sustainability, critical for communities like mine, and they are advocating for a future where every child breathes clean air

and learns in a safe environment. We're not just talking about climate action; this vast coalition is talking about justice and jobs for every student, every worker, every community," said **Council Member Jennifer Gutierrez, Co-Vice Chair on Progressive Caucus**.

"The work of the Climate Works for All coalition is as important as ever, especially considering the current climate crisis is disproportionately affecting Black and brown students," said **Council Member Christopher Marte**. "As such, this is no longer just about the environment, but also about racial and educational justice for all. In order to achieve this justice, the City must fund upgrades to public schools, and properly implement Local Law 97, which was passed five years ago now."

"The City has an obligation to recognize the urgency of combating climate change. I was proud to sign this letter alongside many of my colleagues and I look forward to continuing to fight for a budget that prioritizes protecting our environment. I commend the Climate Works for All coalition for their efforts and am glad to be on the same team," said **Council Member Chi Osse**.

"Where our students sit shouldn't determine how well they learn. Old, crumbling school buildings that pump poor air into classrooms are not suitable learning environments for our youth. Yet that is the reality for far too many students in my community and so many communities of color across New York City," said **Council Member Shaun Abreu, Chair of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management**. "I join the Climate Works for All coalition in their advocacy for safe, environmentally-sound infrastructure in New York City Public Schools. This is investment in our environment, our education system, and our youth—and it is one of the most transformational decisions we can make in this budget."

"We have a choice: be a city constantly dealing with climate emergencies we are ill-equipped to handle, or act now for a more sustainable and well-prepared future," said **Council Member Tiffany Cabán**. "The Climate Works for All coalition is fighting for the second vision. That means clean air and water for all New Yorkers, including the working class and low income communities of color that all too often are subjected to environmental injustice. It means the social infrastructure necessary to welcome in the climate refugees that are surely coming from around the world. It means good jobs transitioning our city to a sustainable future with a strong, secure, dignified working class. If we make these key investments now, future generations of New Yorkers will thank us; if we fail to, future generations of New Yorkers will blame us. Let's do it for them."

"Climate policy is as much a public safety issue as it is a public health issue as it is a labor issue," said **Council Member Alexa Avilés**. "Without clean air, clean streets, clean water, we cannot live, breathe, and sustain ourselves in New York City. Climate must be a priority in this year's city budget and I am proud to be a supporter of this coalition's important work. As the representative of District 38, an environmental justice community, our lives are on the line and our people cannot afford to wait."

"I'm thrilled to be a part of the Climate Works for All initiative, with Council Members in coalition with unions and grassroots organizations that understand the urgency of the climate crisis.

Together, we're charting a bold and achievable course toward a greener future with a plan that combines upgrading our decades old infrastructure with well paying, union jobs. Recognizing the disproportionate impact that climate issues have on Black and brown, working class communities, our mission transcends mere policy – every action we take must be a strategic step toward environmental justice that lifts up those most affected by climate change," said **Council Member Shahana Hanif, Co-Chair of Progressive Caucus.**

"I was proud to sign onto this letter with my colleagues and I am wholeheartedly in support of Climate Works for All's budget priorities for FY25. Allocating funds to electrify and upgrade NYC Public Schools is a paramount investment in our city's future, both in advancing decarbonization efforts and in providing spaces that promote the health of our City's greatest resource – our children. Additionally, bolstering funding for Local Law 97 implementation is imperative for holding building owners accountable and driving meaningful reductions in emissions. By championing these initiatives, we are actively working towards a more sustainable and equitable future for all New Yorkers," said **Council Member Yusuf Salaam, Chair of the Committee on Public Safety.**

"Our City deserves a future where students do not have to worry about breathing in toxic air from Canadian wildfires, where they don't have to walk through floods on their commute to and back from schools, or worry about the next hurricane demolishing their learning environment. We must make the investments necessary to support our young people, who deserve a future that is green and healthy," said **Council Member Chris Banks.**

"Climate change must be addressed as an important factor of humanity and today's world," said **Council Member Darlene Mealy.**

Background:

Buildings in NYC contribute to nearly two-thirds of citywide Greenhouse Gas emissions. The single most effective way to significantly reduce these emissions is to decarbonize and retrofit our building stock; i.e. implement Local Law 97 of 2019. As we enter the first compliance period of LL97 this year, there is a clear need for additional technical support, and more importantly, additional funding streams to ensure that building owners are able to undertake retrofits. But private buildings are not the only ones that have a responsibility to reduce emissions, the City also needs to ensure that public buildings comply with LL97 mandates.

NYC public schools' aging infrastructure runs on fossil fuels and contributes to poor air quality, which not only impacts student and staff health but can also undermine learning by negatively affecting student attendance, comfort, and performance. Additionally, schools are vulnerable to ever-worsening climate disasters, felt first and worst by Black and brown students in Environmental Justice communities. While the City has [already identified](#) school buildings as a great place to start to meet NYC's climate goals, Mayor Adams' Leading the Charge initiative has to date only allocated funding to electrify 33 schools out of 100 schools by 2030. Investing in Green, Healthy Schools will save the city millions on utilities; create green, union jobs and improve working

conditions for school workers, and help meet the mandates of Local Law 97, where the City should lead the way.

Climate Works for All is calling for greater transparency, urgent funding, and climate action in order to achieve a just transition to a decarbonized and renewable energy economy.

As previously announced, the following organizations support the Climate Works for All [budget letter](#):

350Brooklyn

ALIGN: The Alliance for a Greater New York

Association for Energy Affordability

Beyond Plastics Queens

Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York (CIDNY)

Citizens Climate Lobby, Brooklyn

Climate Families NYC

Community Education Council District 29

District Council 9 Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT)

District Council 37 AFSCME

El Puente

Fridays For Future NYC

Greenfaith

Ideatek Design

Indivisible Harlem

Jewish Climate Action Network NYC

Kinetic Communities

Long Island Progressive Coalition

Mothers Out Front

New York City Environmental Justice Alliance

NYC-DSA

Network for a Sustainable Tomorrow

New York Lawyers for the Public Interest

New York Progressive Action Network (NYPAN Greene)

New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG)

New York State American Academy of Pediatrics (NYS AAP) Chapter 3

New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA)

NY Clinicians for Climate Action

NY Renews coalition (370+ member organizations)

People's Climate Movement NY

Sixth Street Community Center

Sunrise Movement NYC

The People's Plan & People's Budget Campaign

THE POINT CDC
TREEage
Urban Homesteading Assistance Board (UHAB)
Urbecon LLC
WE ACT for Environmental Justice
We Stay/Nos Quedemos
Wyckoff Hospital Pediatrics Department

[Climate Works for All](#) is a citywide coalition of labor, community, faith, environmental justice, and climate organizations, co-coordinated by ALIGN and NYC Environmental Justice Alliance, that have come together to fight climate change and inequality in NYC by demanding a Just Transition for workers and environmental justice communities. CW4A campaigns aim to move us towards an equitable economy, a resilient, livable and healthy climate, and prioritize justice for low income Black and Brown communities across New York City.

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